A Confidential Chat on Books

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WHAT SHALL I READ?

A

CONFIDENTIAL CHAT ON BOOKS.

NEW YORK:
PHILLIPS & HUNT.
CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK & WALDEN.

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New York.

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TO

MY BROTHER EUGENE,

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE "Sunday-School" of to-day is more than a *Sunday-School.* It has *week-day* relations and responsibilities. It has to do with the associations, the occupations, the social, business, and literary habits of its pupils from Sunday to Sunday.

The present volume is an earnest attempt to direct our young people in some matters not wholly religious, and we have no scruples about issuing it under the auspices of our "Sunday-School Department." It is not, however, to be expected that in every particular any one discussion of "books and reading" will satisfy everybody.

This little book is written by a cultivated, experienced, judicious Christian mother. Its tone is pure, its aim high, its style attractive, its counsels sensible. May it be a "minister of good!"

J. H. V.

NEW YORK, *Nov.* 30, 1878.

PREFACE.

IF a book is not worth reading it should not be published. Therefore I offer this one humbly, yet without apology, saying, with Grumio: "This cuff was but to knock at your ear, and beseech listening."

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WHAT SHALL I READ?

CHAPTER I.

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT.

WHEN I was young I felt the need of wise direction in the matter of reading. It was not enough for me that friends pointed to well-filled shelves of books, and said kindly, "Take what you want;" for I did not know what I wanted. A ticket for a year at a public library and a catalogue of its books was easily obtained, but the library was only a forest through which I was destined to wander and lose myself, and the catalogue only a will-o'-the-wisp, holding out delusive hopes of cheerful light by the way.

What was it to me to read over long lists of histories, biographies, travels, novels, and mis-

cellaneous works, if I did not know which among them to choose? If I took a bold plunge, and made my selection, I was almost sure to be disappointed. The book I drew would, perhaps, be too old for me, or it would relate to subjects of which I was comparatively ignorant, far too much so to enjoy.

So there would follow a weary feeling of disgust and self-distrust. I would argue that the book was written for instruction, but since it failed to instruct me the fault must lie in my mind, which must necessarily therefore be a poor one, incapable of receiving information.

Sometimes this feeling would induce mental lethargy, and I would be for awhile indifferent to books, and try to occupy myself wholly with the occurrences of every-day life. But these brought my ignorance still more vividly before me; I could not listen to any intelligent conversation, nor look at any newspaper or periodical, without becoming painfully aware of my own deficiencies. Especially when in the society of those I loved and respected, I felt that

I must be better informed to understand and enjoy it, and, in listening to them, I saw that it would be wise for me to hold my peace.

It might be possible to do this, but I rebelled against the fact that I should be excluded from the society I loved, and must willfully take my place among the dullards of the earth. Doubtless I should find plenty to walk with me in the shady paths of ignorance; but I longed for sunlight, and felt that if some kind hand would only point the way I might summon resolution enough to walk in it.

Then I would try again and select another book, and read it in a plodding way, moving on my marker fifty pages a day with a dreary satisfaction. At least I was doing my duty. Some good would come of it sooner or later I hoped, and so I kept on, learning very little, wandering in the forest, but never seeing my way through it.

It seemed to me to be a prominent necessity that all my books should be large, and written for old people. The duller the better, I thought.

A child's history would give me more actual information in twenty minutes than my big books gave in as many hours; but I was ashamed to own this. My ideas were false on the subject from beginning to end, and nobody knew my need.

I used to say to myself, "If ever I conquer my difficulties, and have the time and ability to do it, I will help others who feel as I do now." I often wished that somebody had felt so before me, and I thought all readers had been very selfish not to leave some record of their struggles and triumphs.

Now I shall assume that many other young people feel as I did, because I think human beings are very much alike, and the need of one is apt to be the need of another.

If we were all to speak very honestly I think we should confess to a shame of our ignorance; but we are, perhaps, either a little too proud or a little too lazy to acknowledge this feeling and to combat it. We look with admiration at those who have had the energy to achieve suc-

cess; those who seem to be always at their ease, whatever subject is under discussion; who are able to say the word in season quietly, and without parade of learning, because it is as natural to them to be informed as for others to be ignorant.

But we feel that such ease is impossible for us, and we sigh and fold our hands, and say, "I wish I knew as much;" or else we try to get along by a general flippancy, which will turn all serious conversation into trivialities where we feel ourselves at home.

But why *should* any one thus tamely submit to mediocrity? Knowledge is within the reach of all who will stretch out their hands and grasp it.

Some say, "Good and evil grow on the same tree, and we do not know how to choose the good and reject the evil. Ignorance is innocence." Ah, but it is not. That is a mistake too many make.

Now, having taken it for granted that I am addressing a class of young people who are too

intelligent to be willfully ignorant, too ignorant to be very intelligent, too pure to want to grasp the evil, and too weak to reach high enough for the good fruit, I will try in a friendly way to help them, offering myself only as a guide-post in the forest, or a crooked stick which may be useful in bringing down a very little fruit from the tree of knowledge; and if any, after using me for this purpose, throw me aside, and climb nimbly to the tip-top of the tall tree, I will not complain, but lie peacefully where I am thrown, remembering that once *I* had need of a crooked stick, and for the want of it never could climb.

CHAPTER II.

WHY SHALL I READ?

I HAVE assumed that I am addressing a class of young people who are unwilling to be ignorant, and yet even among this class there are many who give the following answers to the question, Why should you *not* read?

"Because it looks so owlish to be forever poring over a book." "Because I have a great deal to do, and reading takes so much time." "Because I forget all I read; my mind is like a sieve." "Because what I learn by reading one year I must unlearn the next, for every thing changes, and so what is the use?"

As to looking *owlish*—I should condemn that remark, except that I see in it an honesty that objects to affectation. If you must necessarily feel that the eyes of the world are on you, you are perhaps right to refuse what you

feel would be an affectation. But I am sorry you have so little independence and so much self-consciousness. I advise you, dear friend, to think less of appearances. It is certainly far better to be ignorant than to pretend to knowledge which is superficial. But why need there be any pretense in the matter? Let me tell you that we all think more of ourselves than others think of us. Remember that you have an inalienable right to obscurity. You may read as much as ever you want to without exciting any commotion in the world, or even in that corner of it which is your home. To sit in public, with a book in your hand, for the purpose of being seen and considered literary, is, perhaps, the flattest piece of folly one can be guilty of. I am not afraid that you, who dread to be thought owlish, will fall into it; nor will any one who has any sense at all. That is not reading, it is pretending to read. If you really read you will soon forget to think what others may possibly say about you, and so I advise you by all means to begin. Keep under that

"mountainous me," and do as you choose, without regard to criticism, as long as what you do is right in itself. Moreover, reading is a very common employment nowadays; it excites no remark whatever, so all the advice I give you, my dear owl, is, not to strain your eyes by *forever* poring over a book; daylight will be better than gaslight; but a moderate amount of reading by any light will not injure you, nor your friends, nor your critics.

My next friend says, "Because I have a great deal to do."

It will rest and refresh you to turn from your numerous occupations, if only for a very few minutes, and read, if only a very little. You will attend to your many duties more cheerfully and usefully for such a rest:

"A millstone and the human heart are ever turning round;
If they have nothing else to grind, they must themselves be ground."

This is also true of the mind. If your duties are mechanical your mind grows weary; give it something to grind, lest it react upon itself.

There are few, if any, employments in life that cannot be better performed by a reader than by one who never cares to look at a book. I do not mean by one who is called a bookworm. I do not advocate incessant study, nor do I recommend any neglect of duty for the sake of self-indulgence. But if you really want to read, it is astonishing how much time you will find for it. Many a mother at the head of a large household finds time to rest her tired head by forgetting her cares for one short half hour over her book. Many a business man rises a little earlier that he may lighten his day's responsibilities by a cheerful start with some clever author. And surely the hour spent in rocking a fretful baby is brighter and shorter for the pleasant thought that the book suggested, which dwells in the mind through the long day, and is something for the millstone to grind. And business is not hindered by knowledge, and the responsibilities of life are not lessened by a hearty laugh. If your life is toilsome, read to forget your toil just long

enough to enable you to work more cheerfully for the rest.

Let any one who thinks his lot in life is particularly hard read the lives of others, and he will see there is nothing uncommon in his case. Others have struggled, worked, been disappointed, and cast down, yet they have triumphed in the end.

Let any one who feels depressed by sickness, poverty, or care, read and find out how other burdened souls bore depression, poverty, and care ; how others have mourned and been comforted ; how others have sinned and suffered ; how others have gone rejoicing in their lot, as God gave it to them, or have sunk into apathy and despair, according to the use or abuse they made of God's good gift of reason. All such reading helps us to live, and if our lives are full of anxiety we need such helps. Devote a few minutes to feeding your mind, just as you give your body food to keep it in good working order. Oil the machine and it will work more easily, and will not complain with creak-

ings and groanings. The time lost will be more than made up in the increased speed and ease with which the machinery will run. Read, then, *because* you have a great deal to do.

The next objection is, "Because I forget every thing."

The great Talleyrand once said. "All I have learned I have forgotten, what I know I guess." This was very clever in its way, but you will observe that without previous knowledge he could scarcely have made accurate guesses. It has been said that the difference between a well-educated person, and one who is not, is that the former always knows where to *refer* for information; and one of our cleverest lawyers confessed that all his study had only taught him where to find knowledge when he needed to seek it. There are wonderful instances of memory on record, but chiefly related about those who were people of one idea. A mind subject to constant interruption cannot hope to remember all things; one circumstance

crowds out another, and an active mind and retentive memory do not often go together. You need not consider your mind as a sieve, because you do not remember all you read. You may forget some fact entirely, as you suppose, till you have occasion to use it, when it will start up fresh in your memory. Or if you still feel that you are inaccurate, you may remember where you met with it, and reference to that place will re-establish it in your mind. Charles Lamb gives us a charming account of a visit he and his "Cousin Bridget" paid to some relatives who lived in a remote part of the country; he describes the kindness of their reception, and speaks in this way of his cousin's memory:

"With what kindness we were received by them; how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of persons and things, to my utter astonishment and her own—old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, *as*

words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth."

This is the way we remember. We need the friendly warmth of social intercourse, and that brings out our hidden or half-remembered thoughts, and ideas, and recollections.

But a patient, attentive habit of reading goes far to fix our memory. "The art of memory is the art of attention." We remember what interests us. Do you not find this to be true?

If you are fond of fishing, you probably are well instructed on that subject; you can remember all about fishing. Or, if you are fond of dress, you can remember just how many ruffles are fashionable on a skirt, and the name of the last new color.

Why can you remember one thing and not another?

Simply because one thing interests you, and the other does not. But you can cultivate this art of memory, and if you are in earnest you *will* cultivate it.

Perhaps you are not fond of reading, and yet

you wish to cultivate your taste in this respect. Then do not choose a hard book, a dull book, a big book, and read away as though condemned to hard labor.

Take something that interests you, even if it is a child's book ; do not be ashamed to be seen reading a child's book. If it is capable of interesting you, and other books do not interest you, begin with it, and read it attentively. You will remember it if it has interested you. That is the first step gained, the first point reached. You will see that you can remember something. Little by little your memory will strengthen if you exercise it. Determination will prevail. "For they can conquer who believe they can."

Do not crowd your memory, do not undertake too much. One little song well remembered is worth fifty facts forgotten. Children often say, "I forgot to remember." So, many readers forget to remember ; but this is a state of mental inactivity, which can be overcome. Do not allow yourself to be conquered by sloth ;

make one well-sustained, good, strong effort, and you will be cured. Who wants a bed-ridden mind? If you are forgetful, you will do well to read.

What is the next objection?

"Because what I learn one year I must unlearn the next, so what is the use?"

One might as well say, because I shall be hungry again I will not eat. It is true that with the progress of science the views of thinking men change, and there are many more things in heaven and earth than ever were dreamed of in our grandparents' philosophy. But shall any one give this as a reason for not informing himself, as far as he may? I hope not! You may, perhaps, never be able to lead, but surely you may follow your age; and even granting that the wisdom of the present day may be folly to the next generation, still it all helped to prepare the way for what was better.

Those who come after us cannot arrive at their wisdom till we have done some good, solid thinking. If we believe in progression, and

that the world will grow wiser, better, and holier as it grows older, we shall be glad the time will come when dark things shall be made light even though *we* never shall see that light. Let us hold our penny tallow dip steadily, if that is all we have, till a more glorious light is kindled from its feeble flame.

Let us, at least, know as much as we may, then, if in our old age we find we must change some of our views, our minds will have been prepared for the change, in fact, we have helped to make it. Our enlightened intelligence has rejected what was false and accepted what was true. We leave the world possibly a trifle brighter than we found it, and we depart thankfully bequeathing our wisdom merely as a stepping-stone to those who are to follow us; glad to have shed ever so feeble a light, glad to have left ever so small a stone, as guide and help to stronger eyes and feet than ours.

Now, having answered your objections—why you should *not* read—I will give you a reason why you should.

We ought not to live for ourselves alone, we ought to live for others. Whatever instructs and enlarges our minds, increases our power in this respect.

Ignorance does more harm than any thing in the world except sin—and ignorance leads to sin. A narrow-contracted mind does injury wherever it goes. Look at any small, uneducated, unintellectual, unrefined community. What are the aims and thoughts and sentiments of its members? Are they not narrow, small, and pitiful? Hear such people talk about each other! Malice, envy, and detraction become apparent at once. Hear them comment on the age in which they live! To them science is a humbug, thought is dangerous, heroism is self-seeking, religion is hypocrisy. Why? Simply because their minds have nothing to grind, and must themselves be ground. Simply because they will not open their eyes and see the light, and so they must remain in darkness. O "how great is that darkness!"

Place any member of such a community in a

position of power, and what confusion will be wrought! Bigotry and superstition, those true children of ignorance, accomplish their work with fatal swiftness. The more earnest an unenlightened man is, the more mischief he will do. Has not weakness slain its thousands, and ignorance its tens of thousands, ever since the world began? Look at the massacres of religious bodies by those calling themselves Christians; those who *knew not* what manner of Spirit they were of! Look at the tortures inflicted on men of science in old times! at the burning of witches, not so very long ago, in our own country!

Do you suppose liberally-instructed minds could have tortured Galileo, or burnt a so-called witch? It was ignorance that did the mischief. Ah! thank God for that prayer on the cross: "Forgive them; for they *know not* what they do." And thank God this is an age of progress, and it is the duty of every rational human being to progress with the age, boldly, prayerfully, and with strength. Intellectual development

gives this strength, and knowledge induces the humility that brings us to God's feet, there meekly to try and learn of him how best to live, that his world may be the better for our lives.

"What!" You say, "Do you suppose that *I* ever should be tempted to be brutal or cruel because I do not read? That is really straining a point. You said just now that I was obscure; what difference does it make to the world what *I* do, or whether I am informed or not?"

It makes just this difference. However obscure your lot in life may be, you are daily and hourly exerting an influence on those around you. If your mind is narrow, it is a narrow influence; if your mind is enlarged, it is a broad, blessed influence. You would not be willfully cruel, yet, for lack of knowledge, you might wound some sensitive soul almost to death. You may in your own obscure corner torture your friend, by misunderstanding and misrepresenting him, till in shallow ignorance you have fastened on him the names of atheist, free-thinker, infidel. You may weaken the influence

of good Christians, you may embitter your own life and that of others by doubting kindness, suspecting friendship, disbelieving truth and goodness, not because you want to be hard and cruel, but because you are ignorant.

"And will reading prevent all this?"

Yes, in great measure, it will. You can hardly read intelligently without seeing what motives have actuated others. You recognize the springs of action, you see cause and effect, you know *why* this great evil was done, *why* that great good was thought of, and you learn to read character, to discriminate nicely, to think soberly, to judge slowly. You are studying mankind, and you learn to direct yourself. You learn charity also, for a knowledge of human nature teaches charity. You see its weakness, its misery, its folly; you see its great and bitter need of a Saviour. The history of the world teaches you to be very charitable, to pity, not to strike; and a knowledge of your Lord and Master will teach you to forgive, not to condemn.

So, if you ask me why you should read, I reply: To develop the mind that God has given you for the benefit of your fellow-beings; to learn, that you may help others; to understand, that you may do all the good in your day and generation that one mortal may do; to trade with your talents for your Lord, like a good and faithful servant who has kept those things which were committed to his care.

CHAPTER III.

HOW SHALL I READ?

IF, in answer to this question, I reply, "Read intelligently," you will say,

"That is the very point: I cannot read intelligently; that is my trouble. I open a book determined to understand it, but before I have read a page, I come to some word I have never seen before, or some sentence which conveys no meaning to me, because it refers to something of which I am ignorant. Perhaps I ought to know about it, but I do not; and yet to understand the book I must know to what the author refers, and I must know the meaning of the words he uses. It is very discouraging!"

This is a difficulty I know, but not as great as you think, and let me whisper confidentially to you that I have often been puzzled in this way myself, and know just how provoking it is. But for encouragement I will add, that nine

readers out of ten meet with the same difficulty, and I doubt if they could give an intelligent explanation of every word on a double page of any thoughtful work.

To test this I once opened in a random way the book that lay nearest to me, and challenged a party of five intelligent people to explain one page thoroughly to me.

The book was "Froude's History of England," a book written by an Englishman, in the English language, and the intelligent five smiled as I proposed the test. In the page to which I opened was this sentence: "No sooner had the pacification of Nice been completed, and Henry had found that he was not, after all, to be admitted as a *party contrahent*, than, without quarreling with Charles, he turned his position by immediate advances to the *Smalcaldic League*." How many do you suppose of the five could explain this? *Not one!* Yet they were all well-educated people. The next book, opened in the same random way, was Mackenzie's "Life of Walter Scott," and on the first

page to which I turned was an allusion to "the Culdees." This was referred to a party of twelve. One said it was a group of islands; but knew nothing of their location. Another said it was a name for Irish fairies. Nine of the party frankly confessed ignorance, and the twelfth gave the correct answer. The twelfth was a quiet man who seldom spoke; the intelligent eleven doubted his information, and he referred them, not to an abstruse ecclesiastical work, but to one of Walter Scott's novels, where, to be sure, the desired knowledge lay.

I shall not tell you who the Culdees were. Their history is interesting, but I shall let you find out for yourselves; and you may also look up information respecting the Smalcaldic League, which is also interesting, and "party contrahent," which is *not* interesting.

But you say, "Universal ignorance is not encouraging to the young reader."

In a certain way it is. There is a French proverb which says, "In the realm of the blind

the one-eyed are kings." And applied to reading and general information this is encouraging, because it removes false shame, which is the very destruction of one's mind. A feeling of pride, a fear lest you be ridiculed for your ignorance, is at once absurd and perfectly natural. Children, as a rule, are merciless, and ridicule unsparingly the mistakes of their companions. We have all smarted under this in childhood, and it takes us a great while to outgrow the impression it leaves. We shrink from ridicule, and dread to expose ourselves to it willfully.

But conquer this feeling! Live above it! Even make your mistake! The literary world will not quake if you *should* call the Culdees a group of islands. The only possible consequence of your mistake would be that you might receive information from the one-eyed who is king of that one fact. Do not be afraid of others. As a rule, human nature is kind and refined; intelligent human nature is *very* kind. I have never yet seen a well-instructed person who was either conceited or unkind;

who was not willing cheerfully to give information without a thought of ridicule. Knowledge makes us humble ; it is only the ignorant who ridicule others. Children fall into this error to cover their own mistakes. They think, with other uninstructed minds, that they will elevate themselves by detracting from others ; but years teach them better, and they give up such false views.

No one person can be expected to know every thing. We all bring our thoughts to market, and barter and exchange them. It would be a poor market if all brought the same thing ; or, to use a very homely figure, we are like boys in a school who delight in making "a good swap." Only let us be sure we are able to make a good, *fair* swap ! Almost every body can trade in this way. The hod carrier can tell you how to carry a hod ; that is his vocation, that is what he understands, and, so far as hod carrying is concerned, he can give you information. He is king there, and his hod is his scepter with which he rules his world.

In all probability your world is a larger one than his, and yet he is king in that one province where hod carrying is a necessary pursuit. You can tell him something of which he is ignorant, doubtless. Need either of you be ashamed?

"But I am ignorant where I *ought* to be informed," you say.

Well, now, tell me if there is any one distinct period of time into which all the information of life is crowded? If so, what is the age at which a human being is supposed to have received perfect instruction? It certainly cannot be in childhood; then it must be in youth. Do we know every thing at twenty? My experience may be limited, but I *think* we do not.

At twenty-five, then, perhaps? or at twenty-five, six months, two weeks, and three days? You laugh and say, "Absurd!" So it is absurd! very absurd to suppose that we can ever hope to be fully informed on every subject at any one given time. As long as we

live we may learn if we will. And how do we learn?

Do you not see that because you do not understand all you meet with in books, you *must* read if you want to learn. It is the very best reason for reading. If you knew every thing it would not be necessary. These little difficulties stimulate us; we inform ourselves because of them; we amuse ourselves with them; we expand our ideas by them. So instead of discouragements they should be incentives to further effort.

"But what a bore I should be to others if I always went about with an open book asking questions!"

Very true. There is a time to ask questions, and a time to keep silence. As a rule, questions are disagreeable; I have no desire to let loose reckless questioners on an unsuspecting public by the advice I give in this book! Therefore, I will try to show you a more excellent way.

There are three things really necessary to

an intelligent reader: an atlas, a dictionary, and an encyclopedia. If you own these you are independently wealthy. You can answer all your own questions; you should own them. They can all be obtained for a hundred dollars.

"A hundred dollars!" you cry. "Impossible! A hundred dollars for *books!*"

"Why impossible? And why not spend a hundred dollars for books? Look at the subject for a minute. How much money have you owned since you were ten years old? How much pocket money have you now? What does it go for? And how long will it take you to save or to earn a hundred dollars?"

Many of you say, "A great while; I have very little spending money. I doubt if I ever could hope to set aside such a sum for books. I have to pay my board and help my family; I have not a cent more than I absolutely need for my actual expenses; I am poor, and I feel poverty to be a curse; do not sting me with it!"

No, never. To all who cannot truly afford it,

I do not make the suggestion. It is far more noble to work with your hands for your daily bread, pay your way, and help others, than to indulge yourself selfishly in any way, intellectually or otherwise. To all who honestly say this I reply: Your difficulties are increased, but do not be discouraged. Go on reading; go to public libraries, if you can, and consult their books of reference; do not be too proud to ask your richer neighbor to let you look at his books; get up a club if possible, and by small joint contributions raise enough money to buy your own books; but if all these plans fail, go on reading, even if you do not understand all; one book will undoubtedly help you to understand another, and ask questions wherever you can do so with profit to yourself. Wherever you may meet with information seize it at once. Go through the world as Paddy goes through Donnybrook Fair; wherever you see a head, hit it! You will be astonished to find how much information you will obtain in rational conversation, in the daily papers, and in the

occurrences of every-day life. Moreover, there are cheap editions of books which may be obtained at a very trifling expense. A good school dictionary can be bought for one dollar, and a very fair atlas for three dollars. These will serve your purpose till you can get the more expensive editions. They will furnish an immense amount of information, and shake off that feeling about poverty. If God has given you poverty, accept it as a blessing; it surely is no curse, since it is sent by Divine love Use it well and there will be no sting in it. Let no American, with life before him, be discouraged. Use the mind that God has given you, work hard, wear a shabby coat if need be, save your pennies, give one to those poorer than yourself, and put the other by for books. Or, if two cents are beyond you just now, work and think, and read when you can, and thank God for your reason, your country, and for your shabby coat. It has been said of America that in no other country are there so few men of great learning, or so few men of great ignorance.

"The stock of American knowledge is small, but it is spread throughout all classes." Increase this stock if you can, but if you cannot, at least help to spread it.

But there are many who can easily afford to buy the books I have mentioned, and there are many others who can easily save the amount from their indulgences; and again, others who can earn enough for the same purpose by a little extra work. To all such I most earnestly appeal. Buy a good encyclopedia, a good atlas, a good dictionary, and hold power in your hand. What hardship would it be to wear pearl stud-buttons instead of gold, to wear merino instead of silk, to use glass salt-cellars instead of silver, to walk instead of to ride, to make the old carpet last another year longer, or the dress-coat see a little harder service than you originally intended it should? Small self-denials are trifles—deny yourself and get knowledge, for knowledge *is* power.

All workmen require suitable tools. What would you think of a carpenter who came for a

day's work bringing only a gimlet with him, or a dress-maker who owned no thimble? Yet, to have a real desire for information and never to refer to the proper sources would be very nearly as absurd. I want to impress on every intelligent young reader the necessity of owning a good dictionary, a good atlas, and a good encyclopedia. Not that I expect you to read them persistently, for you might say with the old Scotchman, who criticised the dictionary, that it contained "braw stories, but unco short."

Nor do I want you to "cram," as school boys say, for the sake of showing off, like the dinner guest that Dr. Holmes tells us of, who could talk rationally and well on all subjects beginning with A or B, but was totally ignorant beyond that letter, having "crammed" from his encyclopedia for the occasion. To read for the purpose of showing off is simply detestable; it is beneath notice.

The encyclopedia may be abused, but that is no reason why it should not be used. It

should be used, and constantly referred to. Dr. Holmes also mentions his "four extensive cyclopedias"—"Out of these I can get information enough to serve my immediate purpose on almost any subject," he says.

When you read have a pencil in your hand, and a note-book not far off, and write down all questions that trouble you. Then when you have finished your reading for the day turn to your dictionary—Webster's unabridged, or Worcester's, I recommend for young Americans—and find the meaning of every word that you have not fully understood; and, as Captain Cuttle says, "when found make a note of." Perhaps you do not know who Captain Cuttle is? We will come to him by and by. Write down the meaning of the word opposite the question in your note-book, thus:

Party contrahent? (Latin. *Contrahens*, p. pr. of *contrahere.* See *contract.*) *Entering into covenant, contracting;* as *contrahent* parties. Obsolete. That answers the question, you see, at once, and if you want to know any more

about it you must turn to the word *contract* in the same dictionary, and there you will find all that can be said about it. Having done which you are just so much wiser than you were before. You know the meaning of the term *party contrahent;* you also know that Webster pronounces it *obsolete*, that is, *gone out of use, not common*, and this fact may reconcile you to what you had supposed your own ignorance in not understanding it at once. So you take courage and proceed, and, having found out all the hard words in the dictionary that you require, you turn to your encyclopedia, and opposite the subjects that have puzzled you, and which you have noted in your book, you write thus:

Smalcaldic League. . . . The Union, concluded March, 1531, by nine Protestant princes and counts, and eleven free cities, for the mutual defense of their faith and political independence against Charles V. and the Catholic States, at Smalkalden, in Henneberg, at first for six years, etc. (See Reformation.)

Now having found out the meaning of *party contrahent* and *Smalcaldic League*, you are able fully to understand what Mr. James Anthony Froude means in the sentence which plagued you so. If you need further information you see "Reformation," which means, look at the article headed "Reformation," and there you will see more written about the same subject. So we inform ourselves. It is but little trouble, and what rich results! You may want to know about the simplest every-day matters. You will find them in your encyclopedia. Perhaps you may require information on some very difficult subject. You will get it by applying to the same friend. Do you not see the very great benefit you will receive from owning a friend well informed, and able and willing to answer all your questions?

If you follow this plan you will be astonished at the rapidity with which your stock of knowledge will increase. You do not know when you may need it; store it up.

Daniel Webster used his note-book, as I ad-

vise you to use yours. On one occasion being complimented on a very beautiful illustration he had made use of in a speech, he replied that it had occurred to him twenty years before that time; that he had made a note of it, but never had occasion to use it till then.

Webster used to say, "Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: when I have a subject in hand I study it profoundly; day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

"Genius is eternal patience."

Perhaps it is easier for you to see the need of a dictionary and encyclopedia than of an atlas. But you really need an atlas if you read history or books of travel. It is essential that you should have a clear picture in your mind of the place about which you are reading. A vague idea of any country will confuse you more than you are aware of. You must know its geograph-

ical position if you would fully appreciate the book you enjoy. If, for instance, you are reading about the Pilgrim Fathers, look at your atlas, and see the exact spot where they landed. It will help you to appreciate their lives, and to understand their fortitude, when you once fully understand that they did indeed land upon "a stern and rock-bound coast."

Looking at the atlas fixes the fact in your memory; you no longer have a general impression that they landed "all along shore."

Who would be willing to read an account of the American Revolution, or the "Life of George Washington," and never look at a map of the United States? No young American, I hope and trust! The *names* of places convey little or no idea to the mind. Washington crossed the Delaware. Ah! indeed! He might as well have crossed the Hoboken ferry for all the difference it makes to me, unless I know where the Delaware is. Knowing that, I know why he crossed it, and how. But the *name* Delaware is no more interesting to me

than the name Hoboken. Get the location of the Delaware firmly fixed in your mind by looking at your atlas and see if it does not increase your interest. Make a habit of referring constantly to your atlas, and do not be content with a vague and general idea of places.

"O, it takes so much time!" perhaps you say. "If we were to look out all the places we read about we never should get through a book! Dear me! Why? Only think! You have told us first to look in a dictionary and find out the meaning of all the hard words, then to look in the encyclopedia, and find out all about the subjects referred to in our day's reading, and now you tell us to look in an atlas, and find out the geographical position of all the places we are reading about. It seems that we are always to read four books at a time!"

No. You are only to read one book at a time, but you are to refer to three others. Suppose it does take a long time to read one book. That one book slowly read and well understood is worth more than ten books care-

lessly glanced at. The object of reading is to gain information, not to hold a book in your hand and run your eye over its pages. If you are hungry it would scarcely satisfy you to sit at a well-filled table and glance at the dishes. You would not like to do this, and then hurry away to another feast with the same result. You would greatly prefer *not* to hurry, and if you found good palatable food at the table, you would remain until your hunger was satisfied. So, in reading a book—if it is a good book, and one that suits you—do not hurry; satisfy yourself with it. As one of the Collects in the Episcopal Prayer Book says, "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it.

You *must* read patiently if you would read intelligently. Do not be eager to read many books. Remember the old fable of the boy and the filberts. When he grasped too many, he could not withdraw his hand from the jar in which they were; but when he contented himself with a few, he was able to obtain them easily.

Do not read rapidly; you must think over your book. Why should you let the author do all the thinking for you? It is impossible to follow another's mind rapidly. Read, and re-read, before you criticise your author, or allow him to influence you. You may entirely fail to grasp his meaning by reading rapidly. Be very sure you understand what it is he intends to say, and then form your judgment slowly.

All difficulties in reading can be overcome by patience, and so, in answer to the question, How shall I read? I reply, Slowly, patiently and intelligently.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT SHALL I READ?

THIS is one of your greatest difficulties; you do not know what to read. Those who have written on this theme say, "Read on any subject that interests you, and make a beginning;" but my experience goes to show that you will not know—just at first—what does interest you. You are ready to be interested in any thing, you are open to a suggestion, but have no definite aim or wish in the matter; you want somebody to tell you what to read and nobody will. You are like a friend of mine who had a journey to take. She heard that she could avoid a long and disagreeable part of it by crossing a certain ferry, and making her way to a depot, through an unfrequented part of the town.

The ferry was crossed at an early hour in the morning, and she hurried along the empty

streets, looking in vain for the depot. Time was passing, she was evidently on the wrong road, yet she had no idea how to reach the right one. She dared not turn back, for now it was too late; she would inevitably lose her train if she did. The depot *must* be near; if she only knew which way to turn she could probably reach it in a few minutes. O for a friendly voice to guide her!

A milkman approached with his shaky, rattling cart, and startled the echoes of that quiet suburb with the yell peculiar to the merchants who deal in that mild article of diet, and which always makes one wonder if the legitimate effect of early rising and pastoral scenes is to develop all the savage in human nature.

My friend was desperate; she raised her forefinger, as though hailing an omnibus, and the milkman, regarding her in the light of a new customer, reined in his horse for one short moment. She must speak quickly if at all.

"I say, man!" she cried, "where am I going?"

"Really, marm, I can't say," was his reply as he jerked his reins impatiently and rattled off again, leaving the bewildered lady to her fate.

Ah! there are very few who are willing to stop and help us by the way-side, and very few who can, even if they would. If we keep our wits about us and ask intelligently, we may receive information; but if we only ask vague questions we need not expect any definite answers. And your difficulty is, that you want to ask a vague question and receive a prompt, intelligent, and helpful reply. Some will reply, to be sure, and yet their suggestions, though clever enough in their way, are not valuable to us.

Another friend of mine once went at Christmas-time to select a present for her dearest one. Her heart was very large and generous, but her purse was very small and narrow. She wandered about from store to store, trying to find something elegant, useful, and charming, which should still be within the limits of this

purse. Generosity dared every thing, but economy said, "Beware!" The well-filled stores were delightful, but distracting, the very richness of her surroundings embarrassed her, and the struggle between her wishes and her ability to fulfill them, created confusion in her usually serene mind. At last she went into a gorgeous establishment, and addressed herself dreamily to the brisk owner.

"Have you what I want?" she said in her sweet voice.

"What *do* you want, madam?" was the not unnatural reply.

"Something for a gentleman," she answered, and her eyes followed the direction of his hand, which waved toward dressing cases richly ornamented with gold and silver, dressing gowns elaborately trimmed, extravagant sleigh robes, riding whips, astounding cravats, smoking caps, and articles any one of which would have cost her a quarter's income. More and more dreamy grew her bright eyes, more and more undecided her gentle voice.

"Something for a *young* gentleman," she explained. "Some *little* thing."

"Pocket-comb?" suggested the shop-keeper, with a readiness that showed ability to cope with life, reducing vagueness of purpose to tangible results.

"Ah! Yes! Very good! Give me a pocket-comb," answered the lady with a sigh of relief. Not that a pocket-comb was desirable as a Christmas present, nor in any way needed by her dearest one; but it was the first definite suggestion that had been made to her perplexed mind, and she departed gratefully with the pocket-comb, which, I grieve to say, was less gratefully received by the dearest one.

This is very much your condition, is it not? You look at the innumerable quantity of books by which you are surrounded, and you feel confused, there are so many, they are all so good, too good for your capacity!

"I want something for a *young* person," you say, "some *little* thing," and you would gladly avail yourself of any suggestion offered for

your benefit. So I think what you would like to say to me now is this:

"You have told us that we are to read in order to develop our minds for the benefit of our fellow-beings, and that we must do this conscientiously, slowly, patiently, and intelligently. We are willing to try; but we do not know what to read. So we rely upon you to tell us?"

This throws a great responsibility upon me, for I do not want to send you all off with pocket-combs, as it were; in fact, my care is more for the inside of your heads than the outside; yet, as I do not and cannot know you individually, and as your minds are not all alike, it is almost an impossibility to make suggestions that would be useful to all. Still, I would not, like the milkman, leave you alone in your difficulties, and though I cannot tell the exact road you each intend to travel, I can, perhaps, interpret some part of your vague questions by the need I felt when I was young, and I can say, "If you turn such and such a corner

you will see the temple of knowledge in the distance."

My great difficulty was that I read with no definite aim nor established plan, and, therefore, I became confused. I confounded kings of the same name, and placed in the same age men who lived at remote periods from each other. I never could remember contemporaneous monarchs, and my mind was a good deal like an old rag bag. I could pull out a red rag, or a blue rag, or a white rag, as I needed to use it ; but nothing was well arranged and nothing was very useful—it was a *tangle.* Now a rag bag is better than nothing, but a well-arranged, orderly drawer is better than a rag bag.

The only way that I can meet this difficulty for you is to give you the reign of some one monarch as a starting-point. You must read carefully all that one good history says about that monarch. Then, after finding out who were the great men of his time, read about them. Then read about all the contemporaneous monarchs and their reigns, so that you will

know just who they all were. Then the lives of the principal statesmen in all countries who lived during those reigns. Then the best authors, poets, artists, men of science, and philanthropists, who gave the tone to that age. Then you must find out the great discoveries and read about them, and the chief manufactures of the day, and by the time you have read as much as that you will be tolerably well informed about that age, and can pass on to the next.

"Why," you say, "it will take us a whole life-time to read about one century, especially if we must consult our dictionaries, and encyclopedias, and atlases as we go along!"

It will not take as long as you think, because I shall only give you a short account of each king. That one account you must read carefully, remember! very slowly and carefully! Then I will try to select such biographies as are interesting; they need not any of them be long. Some may perhaps occupy only a few pages of a small book. If you read carefully it

will be enough for your present use. Try the plan; I think you will not find it a poor one. There are some books that combine history and biography, and you are reading both subjects at the same time. When I give you such a book take a great deal of time to read it. The "History of the Dutch Republic" is such a book. It tells you more than any other five I might give you. So do not hurry to finish it; read it very slowly, and when you have done so you will be well-informed on more subjects than one.

Then, again, a great many men have lived and died, and made a stir in the world, and had volumes written about them, whose lives are not especially useful to you; such biographies we will omit. You will know when these men lived by reading history; but if their lives never effected any good purpose, it is better not to take time to read about them at length. Voltaire was such a man. You will know all you need to about him in reading the life of Frederick the Great; that is, you will know when he lived,

and that he was what is called an infidel. His thoughts were clearly expressed, and he was a talented man; but he never advanced his age, his peculiar views never led to any good result, his influence was injurious, and so we will not waste a great deal of time over him. There are other lives full of interest—lives of men who shook the world, like Luther. Luther acted, where other men talked; Luther stands out in history prominently. By all means read all you can about him, find out all you may about him, study his character, see what circumstances went to form it. Read about his childhood, therefore, and try to trace his gradual development. This is a life to be read very carefully; it is worth a thousand such lives as that of Voltaire, or of any man who went through the world, saying, in the language of modern slang, "Why is this thus?" and never giving any reasonable reply to a senseless question.

When you are older, and your views of life are clearer, and your opinions more settled, you

may read many a book that would not be good for you now. I do not say, *never* read about Voltaire; for instance, the time may come when you may find such a life useful to you But now, while you have so much to learn, it is better to confine yourselves to what you need for the present. So there will not be as many books to read as you think, and you need not be "discouraged because of the way."

What I want you to do is to become acquainted with the real history of the age you decide to study. This will not be found, as many think, in the lives of kings, and accounts of their battles. Perhaps that is the least important part of the history, for the kings were swayed and governed by the progress of events; they did not control the destinies of their race; they moved *with* the race, *with* their times, and were as puppets in the great drama of the world.

But I give you their reigns as a point from which to start as a definite suggestion. For instance, if you read about the French monarchs who lived just before the Revolution, you

will not find any thing very elevating in their personal lives, nor in the doings of their courts, but you will see how the selfishness, folly, extravagance, and vice of the nobles gradually wrought their destruction by irritating the populace, or rather by maddening the oppressed people. Little by little, as the age progressed, and the minds of men worked out great problems, the monarchs who despised the common thoughtful men, were overthrown by those they had scorned. You will see how the American Revolution influenced these thinkers, and in tracing the chain of influences that led to great results, you will become deeply interested. Such reading expands the mind. It is not only the *fact* you learn about, but all the circumstances that made that fact what it was.

Perhaps you will be surprised to find that I have given you some novels in the course I have laid out for you. You need not hesitate to read them; they are good and useful books, and will not only interest you, but help you to remember what it is best you should.

And perhaps you will be indignant because I occasionally refer you to a child's book, like Dickens' "History of England." You need not be indignant; many a mature mind avails itself of little helps. Do you not know some older people who remember the days of the months by the nursery rhyme, "Thirty days hath September," etc.; or the kings of England by that other rhyme beginning, "First William the Norman, then William his son?" It is said of one of our greatest statesmen that he used the little child's prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," till his dying day. I do not doubt he was a better man for it. Do not be ashamed of any thing that helps you; it is a mistake to suppose that wisdom is only to be found in big books.

Remember, that in giving you the course which is in this volume I only indicate a plan. There may be many who know what books are best for them, who are interested in some one particular subject, and if this is the case, then I advise such to read on those subjects instead of following the course. But be conscientious

and systematic. Do not skim over a book and call that reading it; and do not read only the novels and omit the history. Inform yourself fully on whatever subject interests you. Look upon your book as a friend, and make a wise selection; for books, even those read carelessly, make a deep and lasting impression, and you should be as careful of their influence as of that of a living being. You would not, I hope, be willing to associate familiarly with a coarse, vulgar, profane, or flippant man; you would recognize at once that his influence would be bad for you. Then why should you allow the same influence to govern you through a book? If you recognize the fact that your lives *are* influenced by your reading, you will be very careful. Many a boy has left his home, and gone to sea, acting under a spell thrown over him by some interesting tale of adventure on the ocean. It is a very bitter reality that he encounters, and he learns too late the fatal power of the exciting romance which held up such alluring and deceitful pictures to his eye.

And many a young mind makes shipwreck of faith, and love, and holiness, by a presumptuous spirit, which dares to read books far beyond its comprehension. It accepts argument for fact, and, fascinated by a well-written book, and proud of what it considers intellectual strength, it slights the simple old story, and struggles blindly with half-comprehended theories.

I would warn all my young friends very earnestly against the spirit of conceit in reading. It is natural to some to be proud, because their minds are somewhat better than the average, and they select their books with a disposition to astonish those about them with their learning. Now this is just as snobbish as to choose a friend because his social position is better than your own, to boast of such an intimacy, and parade it before your humbler friends. Such conduct is contemptible we all admit, yet how often we see it! What struggles are made to live as our richer neighbor lives, to dress as he dresses, to appear as well in the

world as he does! And to effect this, or to make it worth while, one must cultivate an intimacy with the neighbor, no matter what the difference in circumstances or position may be.

This is a very humiliating posture to assume. It is being untrue to yourself, and I think you will all agree in despising such shallow ambition.

But to aspire to a literary reputation and to achieve success with the undiscerning, because you read a few books which are far beyond your comprehension, is just about the same thing. You can boast of having read ponderous volumes, you can quote with more or less readiness the dimly understood words of profound thinkers, but that will not help to make *you* a profound thinker! Ten minutes in the society of an intellectual man will reveal your shallow pretensions!

Cultivate an independence of mind, not that you may astonish your friends with a declaration of the same, as boys celebrate our national holiday with fire-crackers, but that you may really *be* independent, and capable of ruling

your own mind wisely and well without fear of criticism, love of praise, or pride of intellect. Do not aim to be a brilliant thinker, but *think;* if there is any light in you it will shine, never fear! All you have to do is to keep your light burning, and leave others to discover whether it is a penny taper or a calcium light. Both are useful in the world, but a sky rocket is not especially so. Celebrate your independence if you please, but do so with as little noise and as steady and clear a light as may be.

I said that false shame was the destruction of a mind, but conceit is equally dangerous. Guard against it, and remember that humility is the true fruit of knowledge. Never read "for appearances."

"This is all very good advice," you say, "but it is not telling us what to read."

Well, then I will speak very plainly. "Read what speaks to your heart and mind." Do not read what tickles your fancy only. Remember always that you are accountable to your Creator for the mind he has given you, and avoid a book

of bad influence as you would a dose of poison. Whatever helps you to understand your fellow-man is good reading; whatever chills your enthusiasm for virtue is bad reading. Whatever awakens your faith in nobleness and heroism is good reading; whatever sneers at faith and fervor is bad reading.

Is this enough? "No," you say. "There is still another question we want to ask you. We do not always feel able to read with close attention; sometimes we are sick, or tired, and cannot make a mental effort; can we never read simply for amusement?"

Certainly you can, and may, and must. I am particularly anxious that you should not misunderstand me in this matter. There are many hours which are only well employed in reading for amusement—hours when the mind is weary of long-continued effort, and yet refuses to be quieted in sleep—ours when the body is exhausted, or listless through pain, and can be charmed to rest only through the soothing influence of an amusing book. There are times,

also, when the mind is incapable of making an effort. It would be stupid and pedantic to force it at such times. *Of course* you may read for amusement, and there are many books written that will amuse you well. Nobody has ever yet been hurt by a good hearty laugh; and a clever book that makes you laugh is a good, kind friend, and one you should always try to keep by your side. But you must bring your conscience into the matter, even when you read for the merest relaxation.

Be sure that the laughter bubbles from a pure spring. The coarse jest book, the profane song book, the undignified caricature, should never make you laugh.

But there are books which are perfectly pure, over which you may laugh till you forget your headache, and all the minor woes of life. I will give you a list of such books in this volume under the head of "Books of Amusement."

Never feel as though it were a waste of time to read for amusement. I should be very sorry to have you think so. We all love sunlight and flow-

ers, and sweet things, and laughter, and gayety. It is a perverted or diseased nature that does not love them. We should be dreary enough without them, and so our minds would be dreary and dull without books of amusement.

But just as we love the sunlight, yet do not sit idly basking in it, so we must love our amusement, yet work pretty hard too; and just as we love flowers, and yet take pains to make them grow, so we love our amusement, and yet try a little training even there.

And this brings me to another chapter which I want you to read, about the use and abuse of books written for our amusement.

CHAPTER V.

BOOKS OF AMUSEMENT OR FICTION.

I REMEMBER very well an injustice done to me when a child in the following way: I had been studying all day long, and at evening was tired, too tired to romp or to talk, and so I curled myself up comfortably in my easy-chair and rested, and while doing so I ran my eye lightly over the pages of an entertaining book, which just held my attention without fatiguing my brain. It was a perfectly pure, good book, and I was enjoying it in a dreamy way, the very picture of idleness, I have no doubt, to a gentleman who happened to call upon my parents that evening. He was a good, kind man, and interested in children, and so, instead of leaving me alone where I was quietly disposed of, he undertook to show this interest by leaning over me to see what book I was reading. "Nonsense!" he exclaimed, "why

do you waste your time over such a senseless book?" I looked up in surprise, and explained that it was not senseless, but very interesting. "Absurd!" he continued; "all wrong! all wrong! You are frittering your mind away, you are reading *poisonous trash!* You should choose better books. Too bad! too bad!"

I asked what would be better for me to read, and I asked it humbly, for I had been taught to respect the opinion of this gentleman. "Read history," he said; "read 'Allison's History of Europe.'" And with that he left me, quite crushed and bruised in spirit, a very sleepy, confused, and unhappy child. If he had said, "Go to bed and sleep," I could have understood him, and should have considered it good advice; but to tell me to read Allison's History with eyes that were half shut, was like telling me to rouse myself and climb a mountain. Child as I was, I saw that he was wrong; but still, being conscientious, I laid aside that book and did not then finish it. Not long ago I met with it again, and read it with interest to see

where the poison lurked in its pages. It was absolutely harmless, a well-written, pure, pretty little book!

Now this story may illustrate what I mean when I say that the outcry raised against all stories, works of fiction and of imagination, is an unjust outcry when it is made unreservedly.

There are some earnest souls who look upon life as a hard battle, who buckle on their armor and never take it off, who think it wrong to laugh and joke, and call all laughter the "crackling of thorns under a pot," forgetting that it is only the laughter of fools which is denounced in Holy Writ. To such natures all amusement is a waste of time, and all story-books, therefore, would be unprofitable. I have no desire to criticise such natures, for they are capable of doing an immense deal of good in their own way, and their faults certainly lean to virtue's side; still I will confess (since this is a friendly chat that we are having together) that I wish they *would* cheer up once in awhile! They are very good, but I should love them better if

they were not so very solemn. They do not like stories; they denounce all novels, they shut their lips very closely, and shake their heads and say, "Dangerous reading, avoid it!"

Then there are others who are very active, and who see a great deal of practical every-day life. They see that good common sense is much needed in the world, and that a soft, mawkish sentiment is not needed at all; so they bustle about, and are clever, and kind, and hopeful, and good, but they do not like novels, and they say, "Trash! sentimental nonsense! Up and be doing, and leave such sickening stuff to fools who have no brains!"

But these good people are like my unjust friend who condemned my little good book. They do not discriminate; they are too lofty or too busy to stop and look down, and find out what it is they are decrying so vehemently. Because many novels are bad they think all are. But that is not just. I remember that my respected friend came to tea, not long after he had so discouraged me, and on that occasion I

was wider awake, and promoted to the dignity of tea-making, and I put so little sugar in his cup that he had to send it to me twice for more. I—bad child that I was—gave him just as little as I could, saying to myself at the time, "He doesn't believe in sweetening. My book was to my hard day what his lump of sugar is to his bitter tea. Now I shall see how he likes to go without!" And I concluded that he did not like it, so I relented, and gave him enough in his second cup.

Almost every body likes sugar, and children and young people are extravagantly fond of it. And stories and novels are like sugar to us when we are young; we want them, we crave them, we do not feel disposed to go without them. But just as sugar is good and healthy when taken pure and in small quantities, and with good nourishing food, so novels are only healthy when they are pure, taken in small quantities, and with plenty of good solid reading.

Since it is natural to the youthful mind to enjoy a good story, I am not going to pretend

that it is a want of wisdom to do so. Imagination is a good gift of God, and must not be starved to death. Neither must it be abused.

The desire for fiction is neither unnatural nor wrong; it is the cry of the imagination, and some imaginations cry loudly, and will not be satisfied without food. Since it is a part of the mind which God has given, it is our duty to preserve it in health; but we must not go to extremes, and stimulate where nourishment only is needed. If I teach liberty in this respect, it is not the abuse of liberty. Do not misunderstand me. I have told you that you must be conscientious in all your reading, and even in novel reading you must remember this. Let us see, if we can, how to choose the good and reject the evil.

We have assumed that we are to read always with a view to our own mental development in order to benefit our fellow-beings. Our minds are not to be selfish. How will novels help us to help others?

Professor Porter has given to the world such

an admirable work on books and reading, that it seems useless to try to supplement his efforts with any less worthy. But you know I am the crooked stick I mentioned in the first chapter, and one of the first fruits I should like to draw down from the tree for you is his book. It is called "Books and Reading," and just as soon as you can understand and appreciate it I want you to read it carefully. In it you will find the whole subject of novel reading skillfully treated.

Now, however, I will only quote his words occasionally, in simple form, for your benefit. He divides novels into two groups: Novels of Incident, and Novels of Character.

The first are exciting and picturesque, and very attractive to the young. But he shows us that after awhile, as the taste becomes more cultivated and refined, we do not enjoy them as much as at first; we cease to care too much for the plot of the story, and begin to study the characters a little more closely. When we reach this point we have attained to the second

step in progress, and we reach the third when we learn to study and analyze these characters with discrimination and judgment. When we can study their motives, trace out their springs, and discover their leading traits, and illustrate them to our own judgment by *examples from real life*, we may be said to have attained this third step.

And it is in doing this that we are improving ourselves and others, if we use our knowledge truly and well. This is a way to understand our fellow-beings which is attractive and delightful. We need not wait to see the romance of daily life slowly acted by our friends while we look on, all uncomprehending. The well-written, good novel lives this romance for us, and in understanding it we understand our friends, we sympathize more truly with them, we rejoice more sincerely with them, we forbear to criticise them. The novel may easily teach us the fact that the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and by this knowledge we shall respect the reticence of our friends, nor seek to in-

trude ourselves. It may well show us that a stranger intermeddleth not with the heart's joy, and we shall look at what we might perhaps otherwise call extravagant gayety, with a glad feeling that light hearts and merry hearts did not leave this world when we grew old or became sad. We see the good and bad in human nature so curiously blended by the skillful author that we learn to distinguish it in real life, and human beings are less contradictory to us, less puzzling to us, because of the hero who has interested us in our novel. We liked him, we saw *why* we liked him, and why he appeared odd or unattractive to the other characters in the book. We were perhaps provoked at them for misunderstanding him—then we apply the story to our own surroundings, we recognize the character in some acquaintance, who may possibly become a friend, because of that story and the insight it gave us into his character. Or we recognize what is mean and contemptible, and we learn to shun it; we will not so easily call bitter, sweet, and sweet, bitter.

But to achieve this, we must read a certain kind of fiction. Do not think that any advancement is to be made by reading *every* novel. Here I want to establish a point.

The number of well-written, useful novels is comparatively small, and the number of bad novels annually printed and widely circulated is enormous. I cannot sufficiently express my detestation of the poor novel! Of it our solemn friend may well say, "Avoid it"—our active, practical friend may well say, "Sickly sentiment, worse than useless!" So it is, much worse than useless; it is positively *bad*, and its influence is poisonous.

Professor Porter tells us, "No class of writers exercises so complete control over their readers as novelists do. This control reaches to their opinions and prejudices, if it does not insensibly control and re-shape their entire philosophy of duty and of life. The fascination which they exercise becomes of itself a spell. No enchantment is so entire and delightful as that with which they invest the story which they recite. It is

a very glamour which they pour not only over the scenes which they depict, but over the senses of the beholder. A favorite novelist becomes, for the time being, often more to his enamored and enchanted reader than preacher, teacher, or friend, and indeed, than the whole world besides; casting a spell over his judgments, molding his principles, forming his associations, and recasting his prejudices.

"The entranced and admiring reader runs to his favorite when he can snatch an hour from labor, society, or sleep. He broods over his scenes and characters when alone; he quotes from him as often as he dare, he cites proverbs and favorite phrases from his leading personages. He even aspires to be familiar with his slang and his cant. He warms with increased ardor if his reputation is attacked. He defends him if he is criticised or unfavorably judged.

"Indeed, we may go further, and say that the devoted reader of a favorite novelist often becomes for the time an unconscious imitator or a massive reflex of his author. Like the chameleon

he takes the color of the bough and leaf from which he feeds. He is more likely to absorb and reproduce his defects than his excellences."

This is all true, and the author goes on to warn us against subjection to a single novelist even for a short time, because its tendency is to make us one-sided and unnatural."

If this is a danger in reading the works of the very best novelists, what may it not become if we subject ourselves to the influence of the poorer ones ?

It is fearful to contemplate the mischief that is done by bad novels. I believe there is no more powerful influence for evil in the world.

While you are young you cannot discriminate accurately, and would be obliged to read a book from beginning to end before you would know if it was good or bad, and so the influence might extend to you, and you might be injured, even while you were innocent of any desire to read a bad book. So, for the present, you had better not read indiscriminately. There are certain books you had better avoid entirely.

The old-fashioned novels are not good for you now. They were written when the manners and conversation of people were coarse, and, although many of them are clever and have their use, they would be improper for you. They mark the age in which they were written; but, let us hope, we have progressed a little since that time.

The passionate love-story is also to be avoided. I know it is the most exciting and interesting of all kinds of reading, but it is not good for you. It is a false picture, a deformed specimen. I earnestly beg of you to let it alone. What good can it do you? It will not help you to understand one human heart. It leads you, on the contrary, to underrate real feeling, which is rarely, if ever, passionately expressed. Human beings are loving and suffering all around you, and unwritten romances call for sympathy at your side, but their language finds no expression in the "Tale of Love and Adventure" that meets with so ready a sale. There is one objection to novel reading,

that it is apt to excite romantic expectations of success in life.

This must be guarded against. The novels of the present day are not as open to this criticism as those that went before them, and in the best novels of character this fault will scarcely be found.

It is a great pleasure to young people to talk together about a book, and compare their impressions of the characters met in the last novel. Do you not think so? How warmly you love and hate your heroes and heroines, and how impatient you are of any criticism adverse to your favorites.

This very warmth of feeling and eagerness in conversation is stimulating and good. It calls out powers of analysis and independence of judgment, and is a much better use of time than when it is spent in ordinary gossip.

I wish I could tell you how to select your novels, for although I may give you a long list from which to choose, you will often be called upon to make your own selection. In railway

traveling, for instance, you may, from sheer weariness, buy a book and read it, which will forever after exercise a bad influence over you. If you were able to detect a poor style, you could easily avoid bad books by simply running your eye over the first few pages. But this facility only comes with practice ; so while you are young I must give you broad rules.

Never read the books of any novelist till you have acquainted yourself with his reputation. The names of some authors are as sure indications of evil as the skull and cross bones with which old-fashioned druggists used to mark their bottles of poison. Avoid all the Dime Novels, all the "Great Sensation Stories" that you see advertised. They are catchpennies, made to attract and to sell easily.

Many novels of excellent writers are published in a cheap form, so do not suppose it is the low price of a book that marks it as a low book. If you familiarize yourself with the names of good authors you will not make any great mistake. It would not be wise to tell

you that you may read every work of even good authors. Few, if any, writers of fiction deserve unqualified praise.

But I think I am safe in saying that the works of Sir Walter Scott may be read by young and old. It is fair to judge an author *in some degree* by his life and private feelings. A Christian gentleman can scarcely write what is not good. We cannot read Lockhart's Life of Walter Scott, and not be impressed by the sincerity and nobility of his career. He had his own peculiar prejudices, as all men have, and carried his political partisanship somewhat into his writings. But how nobly we see him living in the midst of his wonderful success and prosperity; always genial, gentle, and kind, true and charitable, extending a hand of kindness and encouragement to others less fortunate than himself. And when adversity came, and he was burdened with debt and responsibility, how bravely he struggled, maintaining his independence of thought, battling with disease, working hard that he might pay all he owed

without a murmur, and none the less generous or kind because of his great distress. It is a noble life, and all through it he bore ample testimony to his belief in God and his goodness. Toward its close we find him broken, feeble, suffering, yet loving, trusting on. Lockhart asked him what book he should read aloud to him, seeking to distract him from the weariness of disease. "Need you ask?" answered Scott. "There is but one." Scott loved the Bible. When he was dying he called Lockhart to him. "I may have but a minute to speak to you," he said. "My dear, be a good man; be virtuous, be religious; be a good man, nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here."

A man who felt and spoke and acted sincerely all his life, and died peacefully, trusting in his Saviour, can scarcely have been any thing but a pure writer. His novels are useful historically, but I will tell you frankly that the first fifty pages are usually dull. The interest of those following becomes absorbing. Scott

gives us the manners of the age he describes, therefore at times he may introduce a scene which is not altogether according to our present notions of strict propriety. But he never makes vice any thing but odious; he never palliates crime, he invariably leads his reader to the admiration of virtue and nobility, and his novels are, therefore, pure. His readers may safely feel they are under the influence of a good man.

William M. Thackeray is another pure writer, although I do not recommend his earliest works to the very young. But "Pendennis," "Vanity Fair," "Henry Esmond," "The Virginias," "The Newcomes," and "Philip," are books which are to be read with pleasure and profit by all.

"What!" some one may say, "Does not Thackeray tell how a young man fell in love with an actress? How a young woman made her way in the world by her sharp wits, which were not always exercised in the right way? Did he not hold up pictures of worldliness, and

show us what is ridiculous in the life of a clergyman of the Church of England?"

"Yes! He does all this."

"Then, how can you recommend him as a pure or a good writer?"

O, my dear reader, never take a shallow view of a good man's good work!

Thackeray was gifted by his Maker with a wonderfully clear eye. (He used to say of himself that he had no head above his eyes.) He saw human nature as it exists every day; he detected its weakness, its pretenses, and he recognized nobility and goodness. He took human beings as he found them, and photographed them. His novels are pre-eminently novels of character. He draws character so perfectly that a knowledge of his books gives a knowledge of your fellow-beings, which you can scarcely afford to be without. He makes a young country boy (Pendennis) fall in love with an actress. Is that a startling fact? Read the book, and see how pure and true it is! In Pendennis we see the career of a young man simply

told. We see his temptations, his struggles, his weakness, and his strength. We see purity, mother-love, and wise, kind influences, producing their legitimate result. By a knowledge of this young man we shall understand other young men, and other young men shall understand themselves, and their mothers, the better for Thackeray's "Pendennis." They will recognize themselves. They will see the practical working of the fact which they have heard dinned into their ears, that "to be virtuous is to be happy"—a cant phrase which they may hear forever without its producing any emotion stronger than that of weariness, but which will be indelibly impressed on their minds by Pendennis. The book is *true*. There is nothing false in it; it is the real every-day life of an average young man.

Thackeray is the Luther of letters. He comes out from his seclusion, his silent meditations, and he says: "I show you the follies of fools, the hypocrisies of hypocrites, the false gods of idolators. I show you the worldliness of the

world, I call bitter, bitter; here is life, here is what man has made it; look at it well, and see the perverted thing it is! Then make it better. Will you not be what you may be?"

He does not preach sermons to us, but, if we read him aright, we see that he has thought well on the words of the Lord Jesus, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Thackeray shows us this evil, not fantastically dressed, to scare us, not alluringly dressed, to attract us, but just as it is, and we may keep ourselves from it the better for his books.

He uses the sharp weapons of satire and ridicule effectively. They overthrow where nothing else avails.

What is it he ridicules in the clergyman's life? Not his sacred office, but his incompetency to fill that office. He satirizes the *man*, and by that satire has many a soul seen its own folly, and turned again in humility. If Thackeray ever ridiculed holy things I certainly could not recommend his books if they were the clever-

est productions of the world. But he reverences what is true and good, and only sneers at hypocrisy. It would be bitterly unjust to say that he ridicules clergymen because he draws the character of "Sampson" in "The Virginians." Sampson is a representative fox-hunting English clergyman of the age of which he writes in that book. What better picture can one want to impress on the mind the corruptions that tainted the Church at that time? It is an historical fact he mentions. Out of that very corruption sprang the fair fruit of a purer practice of religion. Let any one interested in the history of the Methodist Church read "The Virginians," to see *why* Wesley was needed. They will understand the matter better when they know "Sampson," and realize that such men were the men in power at that time in the Church of England.

But if they take alarm, and say, "O, Thackeray cannot be a good writer, because he ridicules clergymen!" they may go without that knowledge, and without the benefit of many a fact

which the clear eye of Thackeray saw for the benefit of his race.

Charles Reade gives us novels of another order; they are exceedingly interesting, and treat of the subjects that principally excite us. But they are not good. He may occasionally draw a clever character, but it is not to serve any further end than to amuse for the moment. His earlier books were written with taste, but his later novels have been decidedly bad in their tone and influence. He has degenerated in his style; and while he panders to the taste for excitement that prevails at the present day, he loses his right to be called a pure author. I do not recommend any of his novels, for I do not see that any good can be obtained by their perusal, and they foster a love of excitement, which is a dangerous thing for a young reader.

To read for amusement you may take Charles Dickens, and find plenty of fun and enjoyment. Dickens is a caricaturist. He does not photograph life as Thackeray does; he looks at it from a different stand-point, and gives us richly

colored pictures of it, somewhat gaudy, perhaps, but very attractive. The crowd will stop before the window of a picture dealer to look with relish at the bright highly-colored canvas which shows some cheerful scene, while they pass by the sober engraving with a careless glance. So the crowd loves to read Charles Dickens; and the eyes that look at his pictures glow with a kindly light, and brighten as they linger by the cheerful scene this genial artist has painted for them. What if he does caricature every body? He does it kindly; there is not a trace of bitterness in our laughter when we recognize ourselves and our friends in his books. He is brimming over with fun, but he teaches us to laugh *with*, not *at*, our friends. The morality of his books is good. It has been objected that he distorts religious characters. I confess I cannot see any distortion of any thing noble, religious, or true, in any of his books. He ridicules *hypocrisy*, just as Thackeray satirizes it; but neither of these authors bring their banter to bear upon any thing truly good. On the

contrary, the very genius that distinguishes what is false perceives what is true, and faith and virtue are ever upheld in the works of Charles Dickens. To young readers, I doubt if any novelist will compare with Dickens, who has made them laugh and cry, and will make them laugh and cry, so long as his books shall be read. I can give but one experience, and that my own ; but I have been happier, and, I trust, kinder, for having read Dickens ever since I could read at all. Sick or well, grave or gay, young and old, Dickens has had power to charm me, and I think his influence has been one of the kindest of my life.

A very popular writer of the present day is "Ouida," (Julia de la Rame,) and her novels are frequently in the hands of many a young girl who should blush to be seen reading them. *I unhesitatingly condemn them.*

Miss Braddon's books, and those of Mrs. Henry Wood, are also popular just now. They are fair samples of the style of novel I beg you to let alone.

All of Mrs. H. B. Stowe's novels may be read. They are clever and interesting, and her sketches of New England life are admirable. "The Minister's Wooing" and "Old Town Folks" are her best. I need not mention "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" it is too well known to need any remark. Mrs. Stowe always writes with a moral purpose, and though some of her books are infinitely superior to others, all are good and safe.

Mrs. Oliphant has also given us many novels, perfectly pure and good. Of these "Zaidee," "Katie Stewart," "Chronicles of Carlingford," "Perpetual Curate," "Last of the Mortimers," and "Margaret Maitland," are the best. They are simply told stories of interesting yet every-day experiences, very excellent in their moral tone. All young readers of fiction are indebted to Mrs. Oliphant for her books, and no less so to Miss Mulock, now Mrs. Craik, for her delightful novels. "A Noble Life," "John Halifax," "A Life for a Life," "Christian's Mistake," and "The Woman's Kingdom," are perhaps her best.

The Baroness Tautphœus has written two excellent novels, "The Initials" and "Quits." These books give accurate and charming pictures of life in Germany and Switzerland. A little love romance runs through each, which is characteristic and illustrative of the country where the scene is laid. There is no weak sentiment in either; the romance is well told, very interesting, and very good. "At Odds," is another novel by the same author, which is good, but not deserving of the highest praise.

Oliver Wendell Holmes has written two brilliant novels, "Elsie Venner" and "The Guardian Angel." They are crisp, witty, and exceedingly interesting. But although they contain the germ of truth, they are so speculative and suggestive that they can scarcely be called safe reading for immature minds. A careless mind would never see more than a clever story in either; but a more thoughtful one might be led into error, although the intention of the author is manifestly good. It gives me pain to say

that I do not recommend Holmes's writings to young people, for I acknowledge a debt to this gifted author. Fifty years from now I think his books will be safe for all, but all will say "he saw through a glass darkly." I would rather that you should see clearly; there is no necessity to look on cloudy scenes when the sun shines brightly.

"George Eliot" is the *nom de plume* of Mrs. Lewes, to whom we are indebted for novels of character of the very highest order. "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," "Romola," "Silas Marner," "Felix Holt," and "Middlemarch," are the names of her principal books. The world is richer for them, and the mind that follows them thoughtfully cannot fail to be elevated by them. The character of "Maggie," in "The Mill on the Floss," is a study by itself, which every young girl would do well to think over; not for the sake of the story, but to watch the gradual development of a deep, pure, yet warm nature, struggling with its own imperfections, aspiring to holiness, hardly beset by its

surroundings, yet triumphing in the end by mastery of self.

All George Eliot's books are somewhat mournful in their tone; they are true pictures of real life, useful and beautiful, "as sad as earth," yet they shall comfort many. The character of "Tito," in Romola, is the opposite of that of Maggie. Tito allows a beautiful nature to fall into ruin through self-indulgence. The possibilities of good and evil are in all of George Eliot's characters, and they develop before our eyes, not as exotics, that flourish or perish according to the temperature by which they are surrounded, but as human beings, in whom is the Divine Spark, which kindles into flame or smolders into ashes, according as it is guarded and cherished, neglected or quenched. George Eliot is neither a caricaturist nor a satirist; she is a faithful artist, and her colors will bear the test of time.

For very finished, patient, and studied writing, Miss Thackeray is to be admired. "The Story of Elizabeth," and "The Village on the

Cliff," are good stories, sentimental in the truest sense, not in the weakest, and very charming, though slightly melancholy. Miss Thackeray has also written many short stories, all of which are good.

Nathaniel Hawthorne is perhaps America's greatest novelist. Being a true American, it is wonderful to observe how little of the national humor is shown in his works. In later life you must read the novels of this man of genius, for such he undoubtedly is; but for the present you will find his books too mystical, too incomprehensible. They are entirely pure, but only an educated mind can understand Hawthorne. Therefore, wait till you are older, unless your mental culture is above the average.

"The New Priest of Conception Bay," by R. T. S. Lowell, is a work to which the foregoing remarks apply also. Our New England writers call for mature minds in their readers.

Miss Alcott's books can scarcely be called novels; they are bright, attractive, fresh stories, which may be read with great pleasure by all

young people. They are "Little Women," "Little Men," and "The Old-fashioned Girl." Her last book, "Work," I do not recommend.

Hans Christian Andersen has written a very good novel called "The Improvisatore," which is his best. It is an Italian story, and well worth reading. All his stories for children are worthy of the highest praise. They are imaginative, but not in the least exciting; on the contrary, his is a most soothing, nursery influence.

Frederika Bremer is a Swedish authoress, who gives us pictures of home life in her own country, which are to be read and enjoyed in all security. There is a selection to be made, however, among her novels. "The Neighbors" and "The Home" are decidedly her best.

If we judge an authoress by her life, then I should recommend the novels of Charlotte Bronté. But much as I respect the woman who wrote "Jane Eyre," I shall not advise you to read it. It is too exciting, too unnatural, and open to criticism. But "Shirley" and "Villette" are good, and I think I may tell you to read

them. They are exceedingly interesting. I would like you to read the life of Charlotte Bronté, written by Mrs. Gaskell. Do not read the works of Anne or Emily Bronté, her sisters; they are not good.

Rhoda Broughton need scarcely be mentioned. The titles of her novels are striking, her style is original, but I hope you will not read her books. They are, "Cometh up as a Flower," "Red as a Rose is She," etc.

Mrs. Charles's books may always be read. "The Schönberg Cotta Family," "Diary of Kitty Trevelyan," and "Winifred Bertram," are the best.

Wilkie Collins writes sensational books more or less interesting, but purposeless; not bad, yet not good.

Madame de Stael's "Corinne" is a very remunerative book, and gives capital pictures of Italy. Ruffini's "Doctor Antonio" is another excellent Italian story, but it is the only one of Ruffini's that I recommend. "Debit and

Credit," by Freytag, gives an excellent picture of German business life, and is especially interesting to young men. "Cranford," and "My Lady Ludlow," are two excellent books, by Mrs. Gaskell; I select them from her other novels, for I do not recommend all the writings of this author.

"The Vicar of Wakefield," by Oliver Goldsmith, is a standard work which you must read. Mrs. Stowe has lately edited a book in which this is to be found, together with "Picciola," "The Exiles of Siberia," three stories from "The Arabian Nights Entertainment," "Gulliver's Travels," "Pilgrim's Progress," and "Undine." These stories are all most excellent in the form in which she presents them to the public.

Washington Irving's works of fiction may all be read. These are "Bracebridge Hall," "Knickerbocker's New York," "Tales of a Traveler," "The Alhambra," and "Wolfert's Roost." They will not especially attract all very young readers; but they are graceful and

elegant in their style, and if not appreciated at first, cannot fail to win admiration in later life. Many young readers will delight in them. Miss Muhlbach's novels are not useful, although they aim at historic interest. They are unreliable, exaggerated, and of doubtful morality.

Mrs. Prentiss has written two books that may, perhaps, be mentioned as novels. They are "Stepping Heavenward," and "Aunt Jane's Hero." Both are excellent, with a decidedly religious tendency.

Miss Catherine Sedgwick's books are good, and Miss E. M. Sewell's are harmless.

Bayard Taylor is a pure writer, but not especially interesting. His novels are "Hannah Thurston," "The Story of Kennett," and "Joseph and his Friend."

Anthony Trollope is a very popular novelist, and those who have the patience to read his works seem to admire them. They are all much alike, being pictures of English life, and have at least the merit of making Americans

glad they were born in America, if the pictures are true. They are moral books, and directed against worldliness, which is represented by marrying for money or position. The principal works by this author are "Barchester Towers," "Doctor Thorn," "Framley Parsonage," "The Claverings," and "Can You Forgive Her?" He has written twenty-three novels.

Sarah Tytler is a very excellent writer. "Citoyenne Jacqueline" is a story of the French Revolution, good and true. "Papers for Thoughtful Girls," and "Sweet Counsel for Girls," are worthy of high praise. All her books I believe to be good.

"Aurelian," "Zenobia," and "Julian" are well written and very interesting historical novels by William Ware.

The Misses Warner have written many books which are decidedly religious in their tone. Of these, "The Wide, Wide World" and "Queechy" are the best.

Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's books for young

girls are very acceptable. "Faith Gartney's Girlhood" and "Leslie Goldthwaite" are the best, but all are good.

Miss Yonge is an English writer of very decided Church-of-England views, which she forces a little too much upon her readers. With the exception of this her books bear criticism. "The Heir of Redclyffe" is very interesting, and good in its tone; and "The Clever Woman of the Family" is really admirable.

George Macdonald is an entirely safe writer, and one to be trusted. The names of his works are "Alec Forbes," "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," "David Elginbrod," "Guild Court," "Phantastes," "The Portent," "Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood," "Robert Falconer," and "The Seaboard Parish."

Bulwer Lytton is one of the most famous of modern English novelists. His works vary greatly in their character. His earlier novels are decidedly bad in moral tone, but his later works show a true appreciation of nobility and

virtue. "The Caxtons" and "My Novel" are his best, and I think I may safely recommend them. But I do not think many young people will care to read them, as they are not designed for youthful minds. "The Last Days of Pompeii" and "Leila; or, The Siege of Granada," are his best historical novels, and are both exceedingly interesting.

I have tried to help you in the selection of your novels by these few remarks on the different popular authors of the day. I want you to observe three things:—

First, that a book must have some purpose, moral or historical, to be a truly good book. Secondly, I would like you to notice that there are very few writers who are wholly to be relied upon. Thirdly, that I condemn all sensational stories.

And I call for justice and liberality of sentiment toward those writers who, out of pure hearts, have given us their knowledge of a world which is indeed full of evil, but in which we are under the necessity of living.

If fiction can lead us to a nicer discrimination, to a kinder judgment of our fellow-beings, to a clearer recognition of good and evil than we can obtain by heavier reading, let us use fiction, exercising our consciences as well as our minds, and then we never shall abuse it.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS READING.

I APPROACH the subject of religious reading with very great reluctance, for I consider it one of the hardest to treat well. The old saying, "What is one man's meat is another man's poison," applies so truly to this kind of mental food, that I, desiring to be truly conscientious, may well hesitate before I advise you on the matter. Two friends may read the same book; one finds it charming, the other pronounces it dull. In general literature this difference of opinion does no harm, but where principles are involved it becomes more serious.

There is a general impression abroad among young people that religious reading must necessarily be dull, heavy, uninteresting, and reserved exclusively for Sunday use. I do not know why this should prevail so generally at the present day.

Some very excellent, conscientious people think it wrong to be cheerful on Sunday, and I suppose it is this same feeling that induces the belief that the duller a book, the more fitting it becomes for Sunday use. I think this is wrong. It is not an exalted view to take of our spiritual life that we must be dull to develop properly. Gloom is not religion, and is very different from gravity. A serious mind may be a very cheerful one. God's holy day should *be* a day of rest, not a penitential season, when all our discontents and forebodings are to be brooded over, dwelt upon, and called worship. It is not necessary to pore over dull books for the purpose of keeping down our happy feelings. We denounce penance as a superstition of the Romish Church, but we as surely perform it by such an exercise, as though we wore hair shirts and used scourges. I cannot think our loving Lord is pleased with our efforts to stupefy our senses. Surely we should bring our happiest, brightest, clearest thoughts to his service.

Religious reading is a help to a religious life; and since our week days are crowded with all manner of business, it is perhaps natural to reserve a great part of such reading for the day we set apart for God's service. But we should not think it *best* to do this; it would be *best* to read a little every day; if we cannot, then it becomes a necessity to read on Sunday. To all, however, who have time and opportunity, I would like to say, that since religious reading is a help to a religious life, it should be a daily duty. Not that we should satisfy the requirements of our consciences by reading a few pages of a good book, but that we should be reminded of our duties, and encouraged in our struggles. Just as we fill the lamp with oil to keep it burning, just as we water a plant to keep it green, so we should daily trim and water our minds, lest, in the hurry and distraction of our busy lives, we forget our greatest needs.

This daily reading need not be dull, should not be dull. Neither should it be lengthy. There are hundreds of lives of men and women

written, which are considered religious biographies. They are doubtless very interesting to the immediate relatives of the subject of the biography. They are, without doubt, horribly wearisome to every body else. To be sure, these lives were those of mortals trying to be Christians, and as such worthy of respect; but still, they are very commonplace; they were but mortals; they were very faulty, very fallible, as one must be, however kindly their faults have been dealt with by their biographers.

Unless a life has had something truly elevating in it, has been lived to some great end, has had peculiar struggles, or wonderful triumphs, or glorious results; unless it has some purpose in it, it is scarcely worth recording for the religious instruction of others. There *are* lives so full of a direct and simple purpose that they are most useful; such a life as that of "Hedley Vicars," for instance, cannot fail to do good. I do not mean that a man must have been a great philanthropist, or a great judge, or a great preacher, to be worthily the subject of a

sketch. A perfectly obscure life may yet be one full of religious purpose. But I allude to all that class of books which go by sentimental names, such as "The Early Called," "The Folded Lamb," "The Shaded Valley," and so forth—lives of sweet and tenderly-loved beings, but lives that served their end when they burned feebly, flickered, and died in obscurity. Such books foster a weak and sickly sentiment; they give the impression that poor health is desirable, and a habit of quoting texts essential. To the robust, these books are discouraging, if they are any thing at all. What is needed in a biography that is called religious is, that it shall in some way have power to comfort or to strengthen others. We do not need to form our lives after any mortal, however good that mortal may have been; but we may find a source of comfort in the contemplation of a character similar to our own, whose development encourages us to hope that we may similarly conquer ourselves, where we know ourselves to be weak. Or the record of a persevering life may cheer

us in some moment of discouragement, reminding us that what man has done man may do. The life of Cowper, sad and distressing as it is, has spoken to many burdened souls, and shown them what they were slow to believe, that the body alone clogged the flight of the true spirit; and much mental distress has been saved to those who have recognized the fact through the sufferings of that good man.

But although biography has its use, it is not well to make it too prominent in religious reading. We have in the four Gospels the perfect life of a perfect man. This is the life to read and ponder, and to imitate. The thirty-three years that Jesus of Nazareth lived for us are so full, that we may read of them from infancy to old age and never tire. The story of our blessed Lord and Master should be the study of our life. If your occupations are numerous, and you have but little time for reading, choose rather to read about your Lord than any of his creatures. Above all books, place your Bible. Books are good, but the Bible is best.

Many books have been written for the help and guidance of Bible readers. These are useful, as they give an account of the history of the Bible, showing when certain books were written, under what circumstances, in what language, and how they have been preserved. Nicholl's "Help to Reading the Bible" and Dr. Pierce's "Word of God Opened" are very useful books of this kind. Many commentators have endeavored to explain the Scriptures, and it is well to read what they have said, but my advice is this: Go to the Holy Spirit of God for instruction, and on your knees ask humbly and earnestly for his guidance and direction in the study of the holy book. If you do this sincerely you will understand it. For the Bible must be spiritually discerned. The best writings of men will not teach you as much as the heart-promptings of the Holy Spirit. Be very careful never to allow a presumptuous spirit to possess you, never read your Bible in the spirit of argument, acknowledge from the beginning that there are many things in it hard to be

understood, and wait patiently till God gives you light in answer to prayer. The answer may be long in coming—wait! The answer may be very different from the one you expected—wait! Christ shall give thee light. Pray for it and wait.

Read your Bible *daily*, and you will learn to love it. Perhaps you will not love it at first, very likely you will not, but—read it!

You remember our Saviour's first miracle was to turn water into wine. The servants who drew the water did so simply in obedience to his command, and filled the water-pots with tasteless water. That was all they were told to do, and they did it. It was the Lord's miracle that changed it to wine. So, if you, in obedience to Christ's command, fill your hearts with his word by searching the Scriptures, you do all you are told to—wait till the Lord works his miracle, and changes what has perhaps been tasteless into a strengthening, refreshing draught.

I will try now to give you some idea of what

general religious reading should be, by telling you first what it should not be.

In the first place, it never should be sectarian, by which I mean, devoted exclusively to the interests of any one sect. Every Church-member should, of course, be well acquainted with his own Church history, but his knowledge should not stop there. It is important, I think, that liberality of sentiment should prevail among Christians, and one reason that we fail in this particular is because we are not sufficiently well informed. Ignorance always leads to illiberality. I do not think it necessary for young people to study the *doctrines* of different denominations; that would be a bewildering pursuit! But the *history* of different denominations is at once interesting and useful, and leads us to a broad charity, because we recognize high motive and earnest purpose even where, perhaps, we deprecate views we think mistaken. Study the history of the Church Universal, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints. You know the old story, do you not, of the

church-bells in the town? The Episcopal bells, it is said, ring with a peculiar monotony, and solemnly repeat the words, "Bishop, priest, deacon!" The Presbyterian bells ring dolefully, "Total depravity, original sin!" The Methodist bells cry cheerfully, "Up and be doing! Pray without ceasing!" And the Baptist bells with a sharp tinkle exclaim, "Come and be *dipt!*" The story says the visitor can tell at once what the church is by listening to the bells. Now it makes but little difference how they ring, as long as the cross surmounts the spire or the belfrey, or is preached from velvet cushion or pine board. If all the bells with their different sounds, and all the priests with their different robes, and all forms or systems of theology were swept from the face of the earth, the cross should endure! Learn the story of the cross, and be liberal to your fellow-sinner. Take broad views, be courageous, strong, and liberal!

"Then if we are to read all kinds of books you uphold us in reading the works of infidels!" Very likely some of you will say this. But I

answer, No. I have been speaking of the writings of Christians, of the history of the Church of Christ, and this question of yours brings us to the very important one, "What is Christian literature?"

Professor Porter answers it in this way: "That literature alone is Christian which recognizes Christ as the object of *trust* and *reverence*."

No one can be called a Christian writer whose works will not bear this test. "Let a writer have a marvelous power of passing into the character which he depicts, and of feeling for the time the very emotions which the character he impersonates should express. Still, the capacity of truly and adequately rendering the emotions of a Christian soul can scarcely be reached by him if they do not awaken his believing sympathy."

This is entirely true, and a book that does not speak to your heart is not a good book, religiously considered, for you to read. Surely, one which ignores your Saviour cannot find any response in your heart, if you love him.

I do *not* uphold the reading of books written by men who deny their Lord.

There is a very pretty, well-written little allegory, called "The Shadow of the Cross," which I remember reading when a child. In it the characters are all children living in a large garden. To each is given a small cross, with the injunction only to walk in such paths as the cross will indicate by throwing its shadow upon when held aloft. So, too, they may only taste certain fruits, and go with certain companions, and every thing is to be tested by the shadow of the cross. Where it does *not* fall is danger, where it does fall is perfect safety.

I would have you apply this to your religious reading. Many books of the present day are written by so-called "advanced thinkers." They may be well written, they may suggest beautiful thoughts and advance moral views, but test them with the upheld cross! Does its shadow fall on them? If not, turn away from them. I must say with sorrow, I cannot see it in the writings

of Emerson. I mention his name as a writer popular among such young people as our better educated New England young men. Thoreau is another popular author. Test his works with the cross. Ah, what shall it avail us if we conquer the world by our intellect and lose our souls? Of what use is our intellect if it will not live through eternity? What is the value of our souls? God's own precious blood! It is too fearfully solemn a subject to be lightly treated. The novelty of speculation, the brilliancy of arguments, that fascinate us now, what can they do for our souls?

Better be like poor Matt in Jean Ingelow's beautiful story of a clouded intellect, for we could look up to the sky and say, "Man that paid!" "Man that paid!" Far better be like poor Matt, the idiot, trusting to the "Man" that died and paid it all, than to bring our minds before God's judgment-seat, stripped of their pride, to hear the awful words, "I never knew you, depart from me!"

Pride of intellect leads many a young mind

astray. It is a danger peculiar to such young people as have been well educated, and have acquired a reputation for smartness in their schools, or cleverness at college. A young man, for instance, graduates well, and feels that he has made a worthy effort, and ended his college career successfully. His friends are proud of him, he is proud of himself, and feels superior to many others whose advantages have not been as good as his own, or who have, perhaps, indolently neglected them. He feels strong, young, and active mentally, and longs to overthrow giants; so he proceeds to demolish established belief, not seeing that skepticism is the real giant he ought to be hacking away at. He meets with plenty of books written in a fascinating way, reads them, and falls an easy prey to another's mind, thinking meanwhile that he is showing the strength of his own by differing from his parents and pastors. They are too *old fogy*, they love the old, old story, but he will show them their error. He has been to college, he has a superior intellect, he has always been

called clever, he *is* clever, *he* will teach the world a thing or two!

This sounds very flat, does it not?

But, foolish as it is, it is bitterly sad, because the mind that might progress, retrogrades fearfully. Humility is one of the very highest attributes of a fine mind. Conceit is its destruction.

But apart from the desire to do some great thing, to show off, or to be eccentric, I believe there are many who are honestly perplexed, who cannot see many things as they have been taught to see them, and who read the works of the advanced thinkers of the present day, to try and find some answer to their troublesome thoughts. They will find by reading, that their cases are not peculiar, since others have felt as they do. If they are sincere in their inquiries after truth they will find it, but not in such writings.

No soul that goes to Jesus in trouble of mind is ever sent away unsatisfied. It was not brave of Nicodemus to go to Jesus secretly at

night for instruction he dared not receive openly, yet Nicodemus was taught by the Lord. There is a legend which says that he became a courageous and devoted disciple. If so, it was a good instance of a shrinking, doubtful soul made strong. But if he had contented himself with the doctrine of the scribes he would not have learned about Christ, and would have continued weak, and doubtful, and ignorant. If you are perplexed, do not seek for help from other perplexed thinkers. What good can any writer do you who merely repeats your own misgivings, and does not suggest an answer?

It is a case of the blind leading the blind. It is a very subtle temptation to some young people to think highly of their intellect *because* they are perplexed. They argue that their minds are more thoughtful than those of others, who are willing to accept every thing to save themselves the trouble of thinking.

Very possibly this may be true; but if they stop at the point of doubt, if they do not truly

desire enlightenment, then the very quality of mind which might elevate them only serves to depress and ruin them. There is no strength in doubt, but there *is* strength in thought.

There are books which would probably be very useful to you if you happen to be in this state of mind. Not books written by "advanced thinkers," as they are falsely called, but by men whose minds were really in advance of their age, who struggled manfully with their weaknesses, who recognized all doubt *as* weakness, who thought long and deeply, who were discouraged, depressed, and harassed, yet who conquered by a patient waiting on the Lord, and through constant prayer.

I think of just such a book as I write. It is the "Life of Frederick W. Robertson," a clergyman of the Church of England, who was, perhaps, at once the most useful and least understood man of his day. His is a biography which will prove, I think, a material help to all disturbed thinkers. His was an uncommonly fine mind, but through the circumstances of his

life it was forced into channels which at first seemed unnatural. It became troubled about many things. But he learned to sit at his Lord and Master's feet very humbly, and found his strength in quietness and confidence. Then, and not till then, he exercised a wonderful influence for good on all; he was beloved by all sects, because he loved them all in the Christ-like spirit of charity. His church was crowded by all classes, not because of any wonderful oratory, but because he knew how to address himself to troubled souls. Still he was greatly misunderstood. Those who took a narrow view of life and of religion censured his toleration, his broad charity, and called him a free-thinker, alluded to him as "dangerous," and even now many true-hearted people are prejudiced against him. If some of his statements do seem obscure and novel to the casual reader, I believe him to have been a thoroughly evangelical man at heart.

This biography is one of the few that I consider useful—it is a study. The development of

his mind, the progress of his Christianity, the struggles of his conscience, the triumph of his faith, are well rendered, and it is a book that bears the shadow of the cross.

Another most useful and excellent biography is that of Dr. Thomas Arnold. This is a happier, less disturbed, calmer life, full of instruction; one can hardly read it without elevation. He was placed in a position of great influence, as the master of a famous English school, and he used this influence well and nobly. He, too, had his spiritual disturbances, but he, too, conquered them.

The lives of the Wesleys are most important, and should be read by every young person of every denomination. They marked an era in the Church's history, and were those of true, earnest, courageous men. Such lives are like stirring trumpet-notes, they animate and cheer, rouse the sluggish, and fire the enthusiastic. Brave and gentle, terribly earnest, yet loving and sympathetic, inflexible yet tender, what wonder that they produced their effect!

It is startling to observe the immense influence of individual effort in the lives of the Wesleys. When we think what they accomplished, single-handed, as we may almost say, we stop to ask if the talent God has given *us* lies hidden! Such lives make us think: are *we* trading for our Lord? Behold, they had ten pounds! Yes, but what are we doing with our one?

I have mentioned, in the "Course of Reading" I have given you, an article by Froude on "Erasmus and Luther." It is an article to be well thought over in this connection. In it we see the difference between the man of thought and the man of action. If you read the lives of men, try to draw the proper inference, try to receive into your minds the right suggestions these lives make. If you can do this, biography may be good religious reading for you.

I do not think highly of a certain style of book which is popular with publishers, and, very likely, with readers. I mean the jerky, disconnected compilation of texts and verses of hymns. Such books are very wearing to the mind. In

reading them one is reminded of certain railroads. It seems impossible to make a fair start. One experiences a series of jerks very distressing to the nervous system.

When we read a text we need the connection. The text may be beautiful in itself, but cannot be as beautiful as if the gem were in its proper setting. For *reference* books of texts may possibly be useful, though a Bible student never has any difficulty in finding chapter and verse; and one always may use a Concordance. However, I do not wholly condemn such books, for they are often acceptable to sick people, whose minds are not able to endure any mental strain. But they should not be used by *readers*. They are not *reading*. I have known young girls pore over such books. The same amount of time spent in sustained thought over one chapter of the Bible, or of any religious book, would be more usefully employed, I think. It is an indolent mind that can be satisfied to allow another to pick out all the beauties of the Bible for it. Moreover, the real sense of the passage is often lost by iso-

lating it. I will give you an instance of what I mean. We will suppose that we are reading a collection of disconnected comforting assurances.

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

"If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you?"

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

"She hath done what she could."

"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Now, if we go on reading a quantity of these texts, what is the result? What is the effect on our minds? Is it not to make us feel that we, in great measure, deserve all comfort, all blessing——that we *do* forgive men their trespasses, that God *will* clothe us luxuriously, that we *are* good and faithful servants, that we have done what we could, that our spirits are willing?

We do not see the connection, therefore we are apt to forget that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither shall we be forgiven. We fail to see the meaning of the Lord's words when he pleads against the worldly spirit; we forget that there is a sentence of despair for the impenitent, that there are servants who are not good and faithful, and possibly we may be among the number; we forget the tears of the penitent woman and her self-sacrifice, and rest assured that *we* have done what we could; and we forget the warning, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." The same time spent in careful consideration of any one passage and its connection would have been enough to impress the real meaning on our hearts—to have furnished mental food for many and many an hour.

To many minds, books of devotional poetry are very useful and elevating. There are some beautiful collections of hymns. One, called "Hymns of the Church Militant," collected by Miss Warner, is very good. Another, "Hymns from the Land of Luther," is very acceptable

to all who like the German style of poetry. "Hymns of the Ages" is a fine collection. Wesley's Hymns are most beautiful, and have been gathered together in one volume of "Sacred Poetry," published by W. H. Kelly & Brother, New York. I doubt if any more satisfactory book of devotional poetry is to be found than this. In the Introduction there are some good remarks on the subject of religious poetry, which I will quote: "When the psalmist exclaims, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,' though every one must feel the force and beauty of the natural imagery, yet only he who knows by actual experience what the Divine longing is, how ardent is the passion, and with what intensity it seizes and clings upon the soul, can appreciate the spirit of the verse, and feel the living truth more beautiful than its imagery, and more powerful than any form of mere poetry. But lest that fervor, which is the best characteristic of this species of poetry, should run into vulgar and irreverent extrava-

gance, it should be guided by a truly poetic imagination, and be chastised by a cultivated taste. Among the writers of sacred poetry none exhibit, in a more eminent degree, the qualities described in the preceding remarks than Charles Wesley. The variety of his compositions is fresh, they have long enjoyed a well-established fame, and they stand upon their own intrinsic merits. As a valuable aid in the dissemination of Divine truth they are not unworthy of the praise of gaining 'listening ears to the harmonies of heaven.' The author's genius is not only consecrated, but subordinate to the higher principles of piety, and every theme is applied to the purposes of vital personal godliness."

Bonar's hymns are very spiritual and lovely, and have comforted many with their sweet tenderness. They have also been collected in one volume.

Keble offers a rich selection of sacred poetry. Some of his hymns are universal favorites, both in private and public worship. One in particular, an evening hymn beginning, "Sun of my

soul, thou Saviour dear," is widely known and appreciated. Some of Keble's poetry is abstruse, and unfitted for the very young; but, as a rule, his hymns are beautiful and acceptable. Dr. Watts still holds his place, although time has dealt gently with some of his more rigid views, and softened some of his theories. And Cowper sings sadly and sweetly to us. His hymns are to be found chiefly in collections, as he did not write enough to make a volume; but all his poetry, though not strictly devotional, has an earnest, religious tone.

Very few young people admire George Herbert, and, I fear, in the present day very few, young or old, care much for him. Yet if you *could* like him you would *love* him. His poetry is so quaint it repels many, especially as publishers persist in giving it to us with antiquated spelling and lettering, which distract the attention. His images, too, are odd, and unusual, and I have but little hope that he will prove attractive to you; yet I must mention him, for his hymns are dear to my heart. Let me quote

one for you. It is called, "Church Lock and Key."

"I know it is my sin which locks thine ears
And binds thy hands!
Outcrying my requests, drowning my tears;
Or else the dullness of my faint demands.

"But as cold hands are angry with the fire,
And mend it still:
So do I lay the want of my desire
Not on my sins or coldness, but thy will.

"Yet hear, O God! only for His blood's sake,
Which pleads for me:
For though sins plead too, yet, like stones, they make
His blood's sweet current much more loud to be."

Do you like it? Very likely you do not. But since I first read it I have heard its music in every stony brook I have listened to.

Here is one of Wesley's, called "Heavy-Laden:"

"O that my load of sin were gone!
O that I could at last submit
At Jesus' feet to lay me down,
To lay my soul at Jesus' feet.

"When shall mine eyes behold the Lamb?
The God of my salvation see?
Weary, O Lord, thou know'st I am:
Yet still I cannot come to thee.

"Rest for my soul I long to find:
Saviour of ALL, if mine thou art,
Give me thy meek and lowly mind,
And stamp thine image on my heart.

"Break off the yoke of inbred sin,
And fully set my spirit free:
I cannot rest till pure within,—
Till I am wholly lost in thee.

"Fain would I learn of thee, my God,
Thy light and easy burden prove;
The cross all stain'd with hallow'd blood,
The labor of thy dying love.

"I would, but thou must give the power;
My heart from every sin release:
Bring near, bring near the joyful hour!
And fill me with thy perfect peace."

Here is one of Bonar's, called "Yonder:"

"No shadows yonder!
All light and song.
Each day I wonder
And say, How long
Shall time me sunder
From that dear throng?

"No weeping yonder!
All fled away;
While here I wander
Each weary day,
And sigh as I ponder
My long, long stay.

"No partings yonder!
Time and space never
Again shall sunder;
Hearts cannot sever;
Dearer and fonder
Hands clasp forever.

"None wanting yonder,
Bought by the Lamb!
All gathered under
The evergreen palm;
Loud as night's thunder
Ascends the glad psalm."

These hymns give an idea of the style of these authors. There are three good collections of religious poems, called "Lyra Americana," "Lyra Anglicana," and "Lyra Germanica." Bishop Heber's hymns are all beautiful. Phœbe and Alice Carey have given two volumes of sacred poetry, one called "Hymns of Faith, Hope, and

Love," the other, "Ballads, Hymns," etc. Anson D. F. Randolph, of New York, publishes a very lovely collection, called "Religious Poems," by the author of "Coming."

There are some well-written sustained religious poems, but I doubt if they will interest you. One of these is by Bickersteth, and is called "Yesterday, To-day, and Forever." It is very beautiful.

It is wonderful to observe the great and lasting influence that Milton's "Paradise Lost" has had. Those who have once come under it feel it all their lives. I have known many turn to their Bibles to find certain images and passages which they felt sure were to be found in the opening chapters of Genesis, and finally, to their surprise, were obliged to acknowledge that Milton had affected them so deeply as to leave this impression on their minds. You should read "Paradise Lost" by all means, but do not confound it with the Bible.

The Rev. J. C. Ryle has written a number of Tracts that have been very favorably received.

Sargent's "Temperance Tales" have also proved most useful in their peculiar place.

But the book of books that I rank next to the Bible for good religious influence, is John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." This is a wonderful book, and peculiarly attractive to young people. It has been a help and a comfort to many, and always will be, I believe. If I could afford only two religious books in my library I should buy a Bible and a "Pilgrim's Progress."

I am very frank with you in saying that sermons, as a rule, are dull for young people. Some are very useful, however, and had better be read by you.

Those of Spurgeon, the popular English preacher, are simple, striking, and original. *I* did not find them dull when I was young, and I do not believe you will. Try them, at all events. And those of Dr. Thomas Arnold, on "The Christian Life," are so excellent, that if you really desire to receive spiritual advancement through reading, you cannot do better than to study them.

Dr. Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion" is an admirable work, and his sermons are all excellent, with, however, a decided Church-of-England bias, as he is a clergyman in that Church. "The Footsteps of St. Paul," published by Carter Brothers, is an interesting life of the apostle; and Dr. Knox has written a book called "A Year with St. Paul," also very good. For heavier reading I would recommend "Josephus," Milman's "History of the Jews," and Stanley's work on the same subject. Also, D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," and Stevens' "History of Methodism."

These are fine works, and greatly to be enjoyed by thoughtful minds. If, however, you find them too heavy for you, do not toil through them. They will do you no good if they weary you, and unless you are really fond of reading and thinking they will weary you. Wait till you are older. You see I am very honest, because I want you *really* to read, and I do not think plodding over a book from a sense of duty *is* reading. These books may be too old for

you. I will tell you of some which I know to be good, and by no means heavy.

All of Mrs. Charles' writings are good, "The Schönberg Cotta Family" particularly so. "Stepping Heavenward," by Mrs. Prentiss, is both interesting and useful. "The Distant Hills," "The Combatants," "The Old Man's Home," "The Dark River," and "The Shadow of the Cross," are all very excellent and interesting allegories. "Helen Fleetwood" and "Personal Recollections," by Charlotte Elizabeth, I am sure you will like, as well as all her other writings. "The Listener," by Miss Fry, is very acceptable. "Benedicite," by G. C. Child; "Bible Teachings in Nature," "Sickness, its Trials and its Blessings," "Sweet Counsel for Girls," by Sarah Tytler, "The Mutineers of the Bounty," are the names of very good books. All of Sarah Tytler's are good, though some are more decidedly religious than others. "Citoyenne Jacqueline," for instance, is a tale of the French Revolution, very well written and interesting, but I do not call it religious: but most

of her other writings may come under this head and all are good. Hannah More's writings are quaint, but excellent. "The Memoirs of Port Royal" is most interesting. It is an account of the struggles and persecutions of the Jansenists. "The Life of the Authoress, Mrs. Schimmelpenick," is a charming biography. "The Life of Madame Guyon," and that of "Fénélon," form an interesting volume.

"Work; or, Plenty to Do, and How to do It," by Margaret Brewster, is a capital book. All of these books are written in an easy style, and are much lighter reading than those I mentioned first.

"Marguerite," by Miss T. Taylor, is a well-written Huguenot Story. "The Boyhood of Martin Luther," and "The Life of Palissy, the Potter," are mentioned in the course, and are both very interesting. These last are suitable for Sunday-schools or parish libraries. "Ministering Children," "The Wide, Wide World," "The Percys," "Poor Matt," "The Little Captain," "Poor Little Joe," are all good.

I will not attempt, however, to give any extended list of such books.

You will find it necessary to decide for yourselves what religious reading is most adapted to your need. It is impossible to direct you; I have merely mentioned the names of such books as I know to be good.

After all, the heart of a Christian is like a magnet; it will only attract true steel. There are many, many books written—one stands appalled before the number. How can I tell you what to read for your religious development? I am a stranger to you, although in one way a friend, in that I sincerely love and sympathize with young people; but I do not know you personally, and *cannot*, therefore, lay down direct rules for your guidance in this or any other respect.

But this I can say, Keep your hearts pure, pray to the Source of light for wisdom, and your own hearts shall then be your best counselors; you will know how to choose the good and reject the evil, and I am not afraid that you will

make any great mistake. Remember to test all books by the shadow of the cross; remember that the world was saved by a *broad* charity; avoid illiberality, avoid conceit, avoid dullness, preserve your independence of judgment, do not be slavishly afraid, nor yet presumptuous; remember that the best of all men's books are still uninspired; read them as helps, but do not wholly rely on them. Use all commentaries, encyclopedias, and dictionaries of the Bible, if you need them, but remember they are not the Bible. M'Clintock & Strong's "Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature," now in course of preparation you will find useful. Dr. Smith's is a good Dictionary. The clergy of your several Churches will probably direct you in the use and selection of all such books of reference. But I repeat my advice to go humbly by prayer to the great Teacher for light and wisdom.

"Keep thy heart calm all day,
And catch the words the Spirit there
From hour to hour shall say."

Do not let the writings of any man ruffle this calmness. Do not let the explanations of any man disturb your faith in the all-enduring love and mercy of God. If ever your religious reading leads you to troubled thoughts, carry them all to Jesus, and come to him as a little ignorant child with your trouble. If you are

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry,"

all the better, for Jesus hears such cries and gives his light.

CHAPTER VII.

A COURSE OF READING ARRANGED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

1400.

Child's History of England. (Reign of Henry VII.) ..... C. Dickens.
History of England. (Reign of Henry VII.) Hume.
Tales of a Grandfather. (Reign of James IV.) Sir W. Scott.
History of France. (Reign of Louis XII.) Edited by Jacob Abbott..... Mrs. Markham.
History of France. (Reign of Maximilian I.) Edited by Jacob Abbott..... Mrs. Markham.
Ferdinand and Isabella. (Reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella)..... Prescott.
Outlines of Universal History, from p. 183, for reference ..... Weber.
Life of Christopher Columbus..... W. Irving.
America, Discovery of. Second Book..... Wm. Robertson.
Conquest of Granada..... W. Irving.
Machiavelli. (Essay)..... Macaulay.
Romola. (Novel)..... George Eliot.
Vale of Cedars. (Novel)..... Grace Aguilar.
Marmion. (Poem)..... Sir W. Scott.

1500.

Child's History of England. (Reign Henry VIII.) ..... Chas. Dickens.
History of England. (Reign Henry VIII.) Hume.
Henry VIII. (Play)..... Shakspeare.
Tales of a Grandfather. (Reign James V.) Sir W. Scott.
History of the Emperor Charles V..... Prescott.
Cloister Life of Charles V..... Stirling.
Boyhood of Martin Luther..... Henry Mayhew.
The Schönberg Cotta Family..... Mrs. Charles.
Erasmus and Luther. (Essay.) "Short Studies on Great Subjects"..... J. A. Froude.
Life of Michael Angelo..... ..... Grimm.
Life of Vittoria Colonna..... Mrs. H. Roscoe.
Artist's Married Life. (Albert Durer)..... Scheffer.
Household of Sir Thomas More..... Miss Manning.
The Huguenots..... S. Smiles.
Young Calvin in Paris..... W. Blackburn.
College Days of Calvin..... W. Blackburn.
Conquest of Mexico..... Prescott.
Palissy, the Huguenot Potter..... C. L. Brightwell.
Provocations of Madame Palissy..... Miss Manning.
Guttenburg, and the Art of Printing..... E. C. Pearson.
Child's History of England. (Reign of Edward VI.)..... Chas. Dickens.
Child's History of England. (Reign of Mary) Chas. Dickens.
Queen Elizabeth... ..... Jacob Abbott.
The Rise of the Dutch Republic..... J. L. Motley.

Don Carlos. (Play) ..... F. Schiller.
Kenilworth. (Novel)..... Sir W. Scott.
Mary Queen of Scots ..... Lamartine.
Mary Queen of Scots..... Jacob Abbott.
The Abbot. (Novel) ..... Sir W. Scott.
Memoirs of Naval Worthies. (Queen Elizabeth's Reign)..... John Barrow.
Lord Bacon. (Essay)..... Macaulay.
Land of Desolation. (Discovery of Greenland) ..... Hayes.
Amyas Leigh. (Novel) ..... C. Kingsley.
Tasso and Leonora ..... Miss Manning.
Sketch of Shakspeare in "Home Pictures of English Poets .....
Conquest of Peru..... Prescott.

1600.

Child's History of England. (Reign of James I.) ..... Chas. Dickens.
Fortunes of Nigel. (Novel)..... Sir W. Scott.
Legend of Montrose. (Novel) ..... Sir W. Scott.
America. (Book IX)..... W. Robertson.
Gustavus Adolphus..... Mrs. Lacroix.
The Piccolomini. (Drama) ..... S. T. Coleridge.
The Death of Wallenstein. (Drama).... S. T. Coleridge.
Sketch of Wallenstein in "Heroes of Europe" ..... H. G. Hewlett.
Henry of Navarre. (Poem.) In his works.. Macaulay.

Richelieu. (Account in History of Civilization) ..... Buckle.
Richelieu ; or, The Conspiracy. (Drama).. Bulwer Lytton.
Richelieu. (Account in "Heroes of Europe") ..... H. G. Hewlett.
Markham's History of France. (Reign of Louis XIII.) ..... Abbott.
Life of Cromwell ..... Lamartine.
The Draytons and Davenants. (Story).... Mrs. Charles.
Woodstock. (Novel)..... Sir W. Scott.
Milton. (Essay) ..... Macaulay.
Sketch of Milton in "Home Pictures of English Poets" ....
Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell. (Mrs. Milton)..... Miss Manning.
Cherry and Violet. (Story of Fire and Plague in London)..... ..... Miss Manning.
Memoirs of Port Royal..... ..... Mrs. Schimmelpenick.
Irving's Sketch Book, page 188. (King Philip's War)..... W. Irving.
John Bunyan. (Essay)..... Macaulay.
Peter the Great..... ..... Jacob Abbott.
Louis XIV..... Jacob Abbott.
Preacher and King. (Historical Novel).. Bungener.
Priest and Huguenot. (Historical Novel).. Bungener.
Memoirs of Celebrated Characters. (Madame de Sévigné)..... Lamartine.
Madame de Sévigné's Letters.....

Legends of New England. (Witchcraft).. H. B. Spofford.
Charles II..... Jacob Abbott.
Child's History of England. (Reign of Charles II.)..... Chas. Dickens.
Old Mortality. (Novel)..... Sir W. Scott.
Child's History of England. (Reign of Charles II.)..... Chas. Dickens.
Child's History of England. (Reigns of William and Mary)..... Chas. Dickens.

1700.

Child's History of England. (Reign of Anne)..... Dickens.
Henry Esmond. (Novel)..... Thackeray.
English Humorists..... Thackeray.
Queens of Society. (Sketch of Duchess of Marlborough)..... Wharton.
Wits and Beaux of Society. (Clubs under Anne)..... Wharton.
Madame Guyon and Fénélon..... T. C. Upham.
Letters by Lady Mary Wortley Montague.
Child's History of England. (Reign of George I.)..... Dickens.
The Four Georges..... Thackeray.
History of France. (Reign of Louis XV.). Markham.
Outlines of Universal History, for reference..... Weber.

Sketch of Horace Walpole, (in Wits and Beaux of Society) ..... Wharton.
Life of George Washington..... W. Irving.
Last of the Mohicans. (Novel)..... J. F. Cooper.
Frederick the Great. (His Times)..... T. Campbell.
Young Benjamin Franklin..... Mayhew.
Life of Wesley. (History of Methodism)... Stevens.
Diary of Kitty Trevelyan..... Mrs. Charles.
Northern Worthies. (Sketch of Captain Cook. Third volume) ..... H. Coleridge.
Marie Antoinette..... Jacob Abbott.
Tale of Two Cities. (Novel)..... Chas. Dickens.
Citoyenne Jacqueline. (Novel)..... Sarah Tytler.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPLANATION OF THE COURSE.

IT is hardly necessary for me to explain the arrangement of the Course of Reading I offer you. If you have read the foregoing chapters of this book you will understand it. I will, however, remind you that I have taken great pains to arrange it chronologically, that you may avoid the confusion of mind which arises from desultory reading. I have selected such books and articles as I have thought best suited to young minds, and such authors as I think are most direct and simple in their style. I want you to remember that this does not constitute a perfect plan. It is far from being perfect. It is simply offered as a help, a temporary guide. When your tastes are more fully developed you will need something different. Many object to courses of reading, and say they are never followed. I dare say this is true, yet I would

have been glad of such a help when I was young, and that leads me to think many of you will be. I have mentioned ninety volumes, but many of these are mentioned merely for the sake of one chapter to be found in them. For instance, I give you Froude's "Short Studies on Great Subjects;" but I only intend that you shall read the one essay in that book, about Erasmus and Luther. So, too, I have mentioned Macaulay's "Essays," but have merely selected six of these essays, and do not intend you to read all the rest. I have also given you Markham's "History of France," not because I want you to read it all through, but because it gives you information respecting the reigns of a few kings whom I have mentioned particularly. I do not want you to read more in it than just what I have told you, for my great object is to keep your minds fastened on one especial age. And while you are occupied with the reign of one king, or one set of kings—if I may so speak, begging their majesties' pardons—I should greatly prefer that you should confine your attention

to that particular time. Do not "look before and after;" keep your mind concentrated on the few who were the principal actors at the time. I have also given you Weber's "Outlines of Universal History," a book extremely heavy to read through. I merely intend it as a book of reference or study. A page of it as all you will need at a time to fix facts in your mind.

"The Tales of a Grandfather" is a very long book, as children say. I have only given you a few chapters from it. So you see you need not be alarmed at the number of volumes. It is very hard to find a well-written, truthful history that will really interest young people, and I have hunted up, with great care, the simplest I could find. Of course, Hume, or Keightley, or Macaulay, are better historians than Charles Dickens. But then Hume and Keightley and Macaulay and Clarendon will not interest you now. They are *too* good. So I give you Dickens, who is reliable if not profound, and you will like his history, and, therefore, remember it. By and by you will read the heavier works with pleas-

ure, and with all the more delight for having prepared the way for them. The best historians assume information on the part of their readers, which is precisely what the youthful reader fails to bring when he sits down to read history.

O I know that is true! although you have all been to school. But tell me, confidentially, did you never throw a paper ball during your history lesson? Were you ever occupied with the instinct of self-preservation, which warned you that your toes were in danger from your neighbors' boots, or that your back was about to be decorated, or was undergoing the process of decoration with white chalk lavishly bestowed by a friendly hand during recitation? These little facts are inglorious but important. For who can remember any thing about that everlasting Smalcaldic League, when an entire fresco was being perpetrated on a new coat or dress, or a pin point had penetrated the cuticle in the region of the knee, just as the good professor was explaining that interesting subject. No. Let

us frankly admit to each other—just you and I, dear reader—with closed doors, that a good deal of school knowledge went in at one ear and out at the other. This is a secret that shall die with us. But still, as you see, we need a good easy little book to refresh our memories before we read Clarendon, don't we? However, it will not do to be lazy. Once in awhile you must read a history through from beginning to end. The first of these I have given you is Prescott's "History of Ferdinand and Isabella." If you like history at all, you will like this. Try and get an edition on good, clear type; it really makes a difference to the young reader. Fine type is very trying to the eyes, and has a discouraging, touch-me-not look from the first. "Ferdinand and Isabella," in a pleasant edition, is to be read *all through*, my young friends, without shirking, *if* you please! I think you will like it, I know you will like Irving's "Columbus;" and Robertson's "America" is another book that calls for patient attention. It is the second volume that contains the "Discovery of

America," and that is the one for you to read in connection with "Columbus" and "Ferdinand and Isabella." You see now, do you not, how I have arranged the course?

I begin with the close of the fifteenth century. Consequently, having found out briefly who were the contemporaneous monarchs of that time, and having given you very short accounts of them, I specify a good book, giving you the important fact of that age, and all matters relating to it. The important fact of this period was the discovery of America, so I give you a long account of the Spanish monarchs, a long account of Christopher Columbus, and a long account of the discovery. Then we find that there was an important conquest made about this time, so we read Irving's "Conquest of Granada." Then we find that a celebrated Italian statesman lived at this time, so we read Macaulay's "Essay on Machiavelli." Being a little bit tired of solid reading, we take up a well-written novel, in which we find further mention of "Machiavelli," a very interesting

view of the character of "Savonarola," and a general idea of Italy at that time. This we find in "Romola." Another novel, called "The Vale of Cedars," lets us into the secret tribunal of the Inquisition, in which we were interested while reading about Spain. So, when we have read as much as this, we shall be tolerably well informed about the close of the fifteenth century.

Of course you may select any age you like to read about. I began with "The Discovery of America," because I am writing for young Americans. But the course is all arranged on the same plan.

As it is not likely that many of you will own libraries large enough to supply all the books I mention, you will find it necessary to join some public library. The subscription for one year will not cost you more than five dollars. If you live where there are no libraries, do your best to establish a book club. This is done by representing to your friends, neighbors, and acquaintances what a good thing it will be to have a

quantity of books for the use of the community, and by soliciting their subscriptions for a club. Many will refuse ; but if you go into the business with spirit, many will agree with you, that it is a good idea. A little persuasion will convince some, a little importunity will weary others into acceding to your demands, and a sufficient sum will be raised to enable you to purchase your books. Here is a useful suggestion from "an old bookseller" on this subject :—

"In starting a library, select from the accompanying list fifty, or a hundred, or more, volumes, and take (or send) your list to some responsible bookseller, and he will fill it for you at a fair discount from the retail prices ; he can, of course, and will, furnish the whole list cheaper than he could by a single volume at a time."

Every book club must be conducted on a plan suited to its own necessities. It is not possible to dictate rules, they will suggest themselves to the members, and can be decided upon as is deemed best in your several commu-

nities. Of course neatness, promptness, and order, are requisite. The number of volumes purchased by the club must be settled by the amount of money raised. At the end of the year the books can be sold, either at auction or otherwise, which will give you a little fund with which to begin a new year's library.

I will give you the retail price of the books I have mentioned in the first section of the course, that marked as 1400, and you will, perhaps, be surprised to find how many books you can buy for a little money. Remember that in buying this list you are getting more than I have mentioned, because you are purchasing *all* of Macaulay's "Essays," *all* of Robertson's "America," all of Hume's "History," (in a school edition,) all of Dickens' "History of England," all of Markham's "France," of Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," and the account of the "Companions of Columbus," by Irving, as well as "The Life of Columbus." These are all very valuable books to own. Let us see how much they will cost.

Dickens' History of England	$1 50
Green's History of English People	1 75
Markham's History of France	1 75
Tales of a Grandfather	5 00
Robertson's America	2 25
Macaulay's Essays	6 25
Irving's Columbus	6 75
Irving's Conquest of Granada	1 25
Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella	7 50
Romola	0 75
Vale of Cedars	1 00
Total	$35 75

There are very few communities that cannot afford this sum, and for this sum you can, as you see, procure a library that will give you plenty of reading for a year.

Even if many of your friends objected, you could still probably find six willing to give five dollars, which would give you enough to purchase this list if you leave out "The Tales of a Grandfather" and "The Vale of Cedars."

But your difficulty in getting up your club will be that many, perhaps most, of your friends will not care to follow this, or any other, course of reading. In that case yield the point, and

continue to get up your club, selecting your books as well as you may. You can make use of the suggestions I have given you, but it is not wise, nor is it kind, to insist upon your friends thinking as you think, and acting as you act; therefore consult their tastes, listen to their suggestions, and remember that all have a right to speak who subscribe. I should not think it worth while to form a club for the purchase of ordinary novels; but if many members of your community are averse to solid literature, there is still a large selection to be made among works of fiction, magazines, and periodicals—and the best of these are useful and agreeable reading.

There are some magazines that all young people like. Here is a list of some of the principal magazines suitable for those who do not want very solid reading:

St. Nicholas. Monthly. New York.
Harper's Monthly.
Appleton's Journal. Illustrated. New York.
Scribner's Monthly.

Harper's Weekly. Illustrated. New York.
Harper's Bazar.
Atlantic Monthly. Literary. Boston.
Blackwood's Magazine. (Reprint.) New York.
Littell's Living Age. Literary. Weekly. Boston.
The Art Journal.

These are all good and moral in their tone, and it is pleasant and profitable to have them circulating in a small society. Perhaps you might effect a compromise, and include some of these periodicals in your list to please those of your friends who object to Macaulay and Hume. In fact, it is a very good plan to introduce two or three good magazines into any book club.

If you are in earnest in your wish to read, I do not think you will be hindered by the expense of procuring books.

All those who live in or near large cities will find all they want in a public library for five dollars per annum ; and those who live far away in the country can, with a little energy, raise enough money by subscription to purchase a good library in the way I have mentioned

I should like you all to read a book written by Henry Ward Beecher, called "Eyes and Ears," and see what he says about the duty of owning books. It is not possible for all to own books, but it is to many; and those who can afford it should.

Beecher says: "Let us congratulate the poor that, in our day, books are so cheap that a man may every year add a hundred volumes to his library for the price of what his tobacco and his beer would cost him. Among the earliest ambitions to be exerted in clerks, workmen, and, indeed, among all that are struggling up in life from nothing to something, is that of owning and constantly adding to a library of good books. A little library, growing larger every year, is an *honorable part of a young man's history.* It is a man's duty to have books. A library is not a luxury, but is one of the necessaries of life."

In another part of this same book Mr. Beecher says: "The love of knowledge in a young mind is almost a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices."

I think I hear some of my friends say, "This book is coming to an end apparently, and not one word has been said about Shakspeare!" Very true! And when I think of all that has been said, and all that shall be said, about the works of William Shakspeare, I feel that further remarks from me are unnecessary. I refer you to some excellent critics on the subject, in the list of books which I subjoin, and I sum up all the remarks I have to offer in this one short sentence, which you will please to remember:

Read Shakspeare.

And having said this, it occurs to me to say no more. When one has said all one has to say, it is a good time to stop.

So good-bye, dear readers, good-bye, in the true sense of the word. May you be none the worse for my efforts to make you better, and may God be with you!

CHAPTER IX.

CATALOGUE OF BOOKS RECOMMENDED.

Histories.

A Short History of the English People....	J. R. Green.
History of England.....	Macaulay.
History of England.....	Froude.
America	W. Robertson.
Conquest of Mexico.....	Prescott.
Conquest of Peru.....	Prescott.
The Rise of the Dutch Republic.....	Motley.
The United Netherlands.....	Motley.
History, General Sketch.....	E. A. Freeman.
History of the United States.....	Bancroft.
History of the United States.....	T. W. Higginson.
Popular History of the United States.....	Bryant & Gay.
France and its Revolutions	R. Chambers.
Ferdinand and Isabella.....	Prescott.
Italian Republics.....	Sismondi.
Scotland and India...	Robertson.
History of the Reformation.....	D'Aubigné.
History of the Girondists.....	Lamartine.
Tales of a Grandfather.....	W. Scott.
Charles V.....	Prescott.
Philip II.....	Prescott.

Chronicles ..... Froissart.
History of Greece ..... W. Smith, LL.D.
History of Rome ..... Liddell.
Fryxell's History of Sweden ..... M. Howitt.
Child's History of England ..... Chas. Dickens.
The Huguenots ..... S. Smiles.
Life of John of Barnaveld ..... Motley.

Books of Reference.

Dictionary, Unabridged ..... Webster.
Dictionary, Unabridged ..... Worcester.
Atlas ..... Colton.
Atlas ..... Mitchell.
Atlas ..... Black.
Dictionary of Dates ..... Hayden.
World's Progress ..... Putnam.
Encyclopædia ..... Chambers.
American Annual Cyclopædia ..... Appleton.
History of Roman Classical Literature .... R. W. Browne.
Outlines of Universal History ..... Weber.
Cyclopædia of Biography. Universal ..... Goodwin.
Brief Biographies ..... Hole, Wheeler.
Dictionary of Quotations ..... Bartlett.
Concordance. Biblical ..... Cruden.
Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature ..... M'Clintock & Strong
Dictionary of Latin Quotations ..... Bohn.
Classical Dictionary ..... Anthon.

Biographies.

Life and Times of John Wesley	L. Tyerman.
Life of Oliver Goldsmith	W. Irving.
Life of Mohammed	W. Irving.
Life of Samuel Johnson	Boswell.
Life of R. B. Sheridan	Thomas Moore.
Life of Byron	Thomas Moore.
Life of Patrick Henry	Wirt.
Lord Clive. (Essay.)	Macaulay.
Pitt. (Essay)	Macaulay.
Warren Hastings. (Essay.)	Macaulay.
Life of Lord Nelson	Southey.
Life and Letters of Charles Lamb	Talfourd.
Life of Sir Walter Scott	Lockhart.
Life of Robert Burns	Lockhart.
Life of Cowper, with his Works	Southey.
Recollections of Shelley and Byron	Trelawney.
Life of Charles Dickens	Forster.
Life of Charlotte Brontë	Mrs. Gaskell.
Brief Biographies	S. Smiles.
Life of Bishop Heber	Mrs. Heber.
Shakspeare	Charles Knight.
Thomas Hood's Memorials	By his son.
My Schools and Schoolmasters	Hugh Miller.
Life and Letters of Washington Irving	Pierre Irving.
Life of Faraday	Gladstone.
Life of Douglas Jerrold	W. B. Jerrold.

Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay ..... Otto Trevelyan.
William Penn. (Essay on)..... Macaulay.
Life of Aaron Burr..... M. L. Davis.
Life of Napoleon ..... Hazlitt.
Autobiography of Mrs. Schimmelpenick .. Hankins.
Gustavus Adolphus..... Mrs. Lacroix.
Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin..... Bigelow.
Life of Thomas Moore..... Russell.
Life of George Stephenson..... Smiles.
Life of Washington ..... Irving.
Life of a Scotch Naturalist, Thos. Edwards. S. Smiles.
Charles Kingsley, (Letters and Memoirs of) Ed'd by his Wife.

Household Library, published by Sheldon & Co.

1. Life and Martyrdom of Joan of Arc .... Michelet.
2. Life of Robert Burns..... Robert Carlyle.
3. Life and Teachings of Socrates..... Grote.
4. Life of Columbus..... Lamartine.
5. Life of Frederick the Great..... Macaulay.
6. Life of William Pitt..... Macaulay.
7. Life of Mohammed ..... Gibbon.
8. Life of Luther..... Charles Bunsen.
9. Life of Oliver Cromwell..... Lamartine.
10. Life of Torquato Tasso..... G. H. Wiffen.
11. 12. Life of Peter the Great..... O. W. Wight.
13. Life of Milton..... Masson, Macaulay.
14. Life of Thomas à Becket..... Dean Milman.
15. Life of Hannibal..... T. Arnold, LL.D

16. Life of Vittoria Colonna..... Roscoe.
17. Life of Julius Cesar..... H. G. Liddell.
18. Life of Mary Stuart..... Lamartine.

Books of Travels.

Notes on England..... Taine.
Rome and Naples..... Taine.
Walks in Rome..... Hare.
Russia..... Wallace.
The Irish Sketch Book..... Thackeray.
Ride to Khiva..... Burnaby.
The Innocents Abroad. (Europe and Palestine.) Clemens.
Letters from High Latitudes..... Lord Dufferin.
New York to Delhi..... R. Minturn.
A Boy's Journey Round the World..... Smiles.
Arctic Expedition..... Kane.
Open Polar Sea..... J. J. Hayes.
Arctic Boat Journey..... Hayes.
Land of Desolation..... Hayes.
India, China, and Japan..... Bayard Taylor.
Wild Life Under the Equator..... Du Chaillu.
Equatorial Africa..... Du Chaillu.
Travels in Austria..... Kohl.
Palestine..... Kitto.
Journey in Brazil..... Agassiz.
Eldorado, Mexico, and California..... Bayard Taylor.
Travels in Canada..... J. G. Kohl.
Homes of the New World..... F. Bremer.

Roughing it in the Bush..... Mrs. Moodie.
Western Clearings..... Mrs. Moodie.
A New Home—Who'll Follow?..... Mrs. Kirkland.
Journey Through the Chinese Empire..... Huc.
Colorado. A Summer Trip..... Bayard Taylor.
A Crusade in the East ..... J. R. Browne.
Our Artist in Cuba..... G. W. Carleton.
Letters from the East..... W. C. Bryant.
Eothen. Traces of Travel in the East .... Kinglake.
Nile Notes of a Howadji..... G. W. Curtis.
Monuments of Egypt..... F. L. Hawks.
Boat Life in Egypt..... W. C. Prime.
Discovery of the Source of the Nile..... Speke.
Impressions of England..... A. C. Coxe.
Our Old Home..... Hawthorne.
English Note-Books..... Hawthorne.
First Impressions of England..... Hugh Miller.
Rural Life in England..... Howitt.
Travels in Germany..... Kohl.
Germany..... Mad. de Stael.
Home Life in Germany..... C. L. Brace.
Tent Life in Syria and the Holy Land..... W. C. Prime.
Italian Journeys ..... W. D. Howells.
Venetian Life..... W. D. Howells.
Station Life in New Zealand..... Lady Barker.
Nineveh and Its Remains... ..... A. H. Layard.
Northern Travel..... Bayard Taylor
A Tour to the Hebrides..... J. Boswell.

A Summer in Scotland	Jacob Abbott.
In Spain	H. C. Andersen.
Life in Spain	Thornbury.
Pictures of Travel in Sweden	H. C. Andersen.
The Howadji in Syria	G. W. Curtis.
Journal in America	Mrs. F. Kemble.
The Plains of the Great West	R. I. Dodge.
Travels in the United States	J. G. Kohl.
California	Charles Nordhoff.
Life in South Africa	Lady Barker.
Exploration of Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia	S. W. Baker.

Essays and Literary Criticisms.

Autumn Holidays. (Country Parson)	A. K. H. Boyd.
Counsel and Comfort	do.
Every Day Philosopher	do.
Leisure Hours in Town	do.
Recreations of a Country Parson	do.
Spare Hours	J. Brown, M.D.
Prue and I	Geo. W. Curtis.
Country Living	G. Hamilton.
Stumbling Blocks	G. Hamilton.
Short Studies on Great Subjects	J. A. Froude.
Lectures and Essays	Henry Giles.
The Bee, and Miscellaneous Works	O. Goldsmith.
A Day by the Fire	Leigh Hunt.
Sketch Book and Essays	W. Irving.
Essays on Literature and Art	Mrs. Jameson.

Essays of Elia..... Charles Lamb.
Among my Books..... J. R. Lowell.
My Study Windows..... J. R. Lowell.
Essays..... Lord Macaulay.
Salmagundi..... Irving and Paulding.
Essays..... Sidney Smith.
The Spectator..... Addison.
The Chimney Corner..... Mrs. Stowe.
Miscellanies and Essays..... Thackeray.
The Roundabout Papers..... Thackeray.
Essays and Reviews..... E. P. Whipple.
Essays. (Christopher North).....Prof. J. P. Wilson.
Recreations of Christopher North.....Prof. J. P. Wilson.
Wit and Wisdom of Sydney Smith..... Duyckinck.
Lectures on Shakspeare and Milton..... Coleridge.
Human Life in Shakspeare..... C. Giles.
Female Characters of Shakspeare..... Mrs. Jameson.
Shakspeare and His Times..... Guizot.
Literature and Romance of Northern Europe. Mrs. M. Howitt.
Literature of the South of Europe..... Sismondi.
Curiosities of Literature..... D'Israeli.
Half Hours with the Best Authors..... Knight.
Essays..... Bacon.

Religious Works.

Pilgrim's Progress..... Bunyan.
Lecture Room Talks..... H. W. Beecher.
Thoughts on Personal Religion..... E. M. Goulburn.

Sermons ..... E. M. Goulburn.
Life and Letters of Fred'k W. Robertson..
Sermons ..... F. W. Robertson.
Life and Letters of Thomas Arnold.....
Sermons ..... Thos. Arnold.
Endeavors After the Christian Life ..... Jas. Martineau.
Ten Great Religious Beliefs ..... J. F. Clarke.
Pursuit of Holiness..... E. M. Goulburn.
Graver Thoughts (of Country Parson)..... Boyd.
Benedicite. (The Power and Wisdom of God.) G. C. Child.
Silence and Voices of God..... Farrar.
Sermons ..... Spurgeon.
Martin Luther..... C. W. Hubner.
Imitation of Christ..... T. à Kempis.
Stepping Heavenward..... E. Prentiss.
Words that Shook the World..... Rev. C. Adams.
Sermons ..... H. W. Beecher.
Wesley's Letters.....
Poems..... Charles Wesley.
Wonderful Life..... Daniel Wise.
The Life of Christ..... Farrar.
The Listener..... Caroline Fry.
Memoirs of Port Royal.....Mrs. Schimmelpenick.
Life of Mary Anne Schimmelpenick.....
Ayesha ..... Emma Leslie.
Leofwine, the Saxon..... Emma Leslie.
Elfreda. ..... Emma Leslie.
Flavia ..... Emma Leslie.

Glaucia ..... Emma Leslie.
Laneton Parsonage ..... Sewell.
Repository Tracts ..... Hannah More.
History of the Jews ..... Milman.
History of the Jewish Church ..... Stanley.
The Land and the Book ..... Thomson.
Sinai and Palestine ..... Dean Stanley.
Sermons on Pauperism ..... B. Lambert.
The Priest and Huguenot ..... Bungener.
History of the Eastern Church ..... Dean Stanley.
History of Methodism ..... Stevens.
How to Study the New Testament ..... Henry Alford.
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Their Wedding Journey ..... W. D. Howells.
Fred and Maria and Me ..... Mrs. Prentiss.
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Through the Looking Glass ..... Lewis Carroll.

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A Foregone Conclusion..... W. D. Howells.
Arabian Nights' Entertainment.....
Miss Angel..... Miss Thackaray.
Norway and the Norwegians..... H. Martineau.
Fly Leaves. (Humorous Poems) ..... C. S. C.
20,000 Leagues under the Sea ..... Jules Verne.
A Tour of the World in Eighty Days .... Jules Verne.

Fiction.

A list of works of fiction mentioned in the chapter headed Fiction, with the author's name alphabetically arranged.

Aguilar, Grace :—

Home Influence; Home Scenes and Heart Studies; Mother's Recompense; The Vale of Cedars.

Alcott, Louisa M. :—

Hospital Sketches; Little Women; Little Men; Old-Fashioned Girl; My Boys; Eight Cousins; Roses in Bloom.

Andersen, H. C. :—

The Improvisatore; Only a Fiddler; Fairy Tales and Stories.

Bremer, Frederika :—

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Bronté, Charlotte :—

Villette; Shirley.

Charles, Mrs. :—

Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family; Diary of Kitty Trevelyan; Davenants and Draytons; Early Dawn; Both Sides of the Sea; Winifred Bartram; Victory of the Vanquished; Cripple of Antioch; Martyr of Spain; Sketches of Christianity; Two Vacations.

Craik, Mrs., (Dinah Mulock) :—

John Halifax, Gentleman; A Life for A Life; Christian's Mistake; A Noble Life; The Woman's Kingdom.

Dickens, Charles :—

Dombey and Son; Nicholas Nickleby; Barnaby Rudge; Sketches; Martin Chuzzlewit; Oliver Twist; Great Expectations: David Copperfield; Tale of Two Cities; Hard Times; Bleak House; Little Dorrit; American Notes, and Italy; Mutual Friend; Uncommercial Traveler.

De Foe :—

Robinson Crusoe.

Edgeworth, Maria :—

Tales and Novels, ten volumes.

Erckmann-Chatrian :—

Histoire du Plebiscite; Waterloo; The Conscript.

Freytag :—

Debit and Credit; Ingo; Ingraben.

Gaskell, Mrs. :—

Cranford; My Lady Ludlow.

Goldsmith, Oliver :—

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Hawthorne, Nathaniel :—

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Hale, E. E. :—

If, Yes, and Perhaps; Ingham Papers.

Irving, Washington :—

The Alhambra; Bracebridge Hall; Knickerbocker's History of New York; Tales of a Traveler; Wolfert's Roost; Sketch-Book.

Kingsley, Charles:—

Amyas Leigh; Hypatia; Two Years Ago.

Lewes, Mrs. G. H., (George Eliot):—

Adam Bede; The Mill on the Floss; Silas Marner; Romola; Middlemarch; Daniel Deronda.

Lytton, Lord, (Bulwer):—

The Caxtons; My Novel; The Last Days of Pompeii; The Siege of Granada; Kenelm Chillingly.

Lowell, R. T. S.:—

The New Priest of Conception Bay.

Macdonald, George:—

Alec Forbes; Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood; David Elginbrod; Phantastes; Ranald Bannerman's Boyhood; The Sea-Board Parish; The Portent; Robert Falconer; St. George and St. Michael; Malcolm.

Manning, Anne:—

Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell; Cherry and Violet; Household of Sir Thomas More; The Fair Gospeller, (Anne Askew); The Old Chelsea Bun House.

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Gold Elsie; Old Ma'amselle's Secret; Princess of the Moor.

Mitchell, Donald G.:—

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Oliphant, Mrs.:—

Chronicles of Carlingford; The Athelings; Katie Stewart;

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Stepping Heavenward; Aunt Jane's Hero.

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Amy Herbert; Earl's Daughter; Laneton Parsonage; Experience of Life.

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Trollope, Anthony:—

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Ware, William:—

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Heir of Redclyffe; Clever Woman of the Family; The Castle Builders; Heartsease.

Poetry.

This list is composed of Poems published by themselves in illustrated volumes. They will also be found in the poetical works of the best

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Poetical Works ..... Walter Scott.

Poetical Works ..... Wm. C. Bryant.
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Poetical Works ..... J. G. Whittier.
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Poems ..... Thos. Campbell.
Poetical Works ..... Cowper.
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Poetical Works ..... Merrick.
Poems ..... O. W. Holmes.
Poetical Works ..... Thomas Hood.
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Poems, by Schiller, (translated by) ..... Lord B. Lytton.
Poetical Works ..... Lowell.
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Poetical Works ..... Gerald Massey.
Poems ..... Milton.
Poems ..... Dinah Mulock.
Poems ..... Adelaide North.
Poetical Works ..... Southey.
Poems ..... Chris. Rosetti.
Poems ..... Samuel Rogers.
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Books of Natural History.

Quadrupeds of America ..... Audubon.
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